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English Men of Letters

EDITED BY

JOHN MORLEY

IV.

BENTLEY. By R. C. Jebb
COWPER. By Goldwin Smith
LANDOR. By Sidney Colvin



NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
1894

HENRY COLLEGE
NASHVILLE
TN.

ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS.

EDITED BY JOHN MORLEY.

Portrait Edition.

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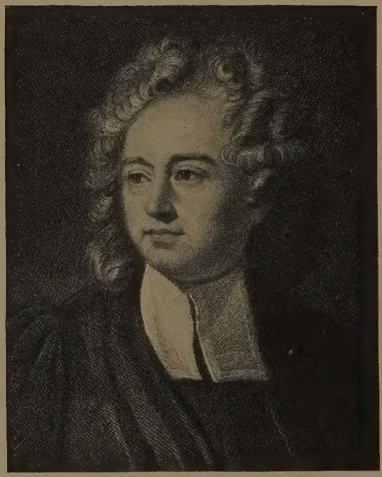
XIII.

KEATS. HAWTHORNE. CARLYLE.

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BENTLEY

BY

R. C. JEBB

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE following are the principal sources for an estimate of Bentley's life and work:

1. Life of Bentley, by J. H. Monk, 4to, London, 1830: 2nd ed., 2 vols. 8vo. 1833.—2. Bentley's Correspondence, ed. C. Wordsworth, 2 vols., Lond. 1842.—3. Bentley's Works, ed. Alex. Dyce, 1836–38. Vols. I. and II.—Dissertation on Letters of Phalaris, (1) as published in 1699, (2) as originally printed in Wotton's *Reflections*, 1697. Epistola ad Ioannem Millium. Vol. III. — Boyle Lectures, with Newton's Letters: Sermons: Remarks upon a late Discourse of Freethinking: Proposals for an edition of the New Testament: Answer to the Remarks of Conyers Middleton.—4. Bentley's Fragments of Callimachus, in the edition of Graevius, Utrecht, 1697, reprinted in Blomfield's ed., London, 1815.—5. Emendations on Menander and Philemon (1710), reprinted, Cambridge, 1713.—6. Horace, Camb. 1711, 2nd ed., Amsterdam, 1713.—7. Terence, Cambridge, 1726, 2nd ed., Amsterdam, 1728.—8. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, London, 1732. —9. Manilius, London, 1739.

Notes by Bentley appeared during his lifetime in the books of other scholars. Since his death, many more have been published from his MSS. These, while varying much in fulness and value, cannot be overlooked in a survey of the field which his studies covered. The subjoined list comprises the greater part of them:

On Cicero's Tusculan Disputations, in Gaisford's ed., Oxford, 1805. —Hephæstion, in Gaisford's ed., 1810. — Lucretius, in Oxford ed.,

1818.—Horace (curae novissimae), in the Cambridge Museum Criticum, I. 194–6, ed. T. Kidd.—Ovid, in the Classical Journal, XIX. 168, 258, ed. G Burges.—Lucan, ed. R. Cumberland, Strawberry Hill, 1760. —Silius Italicus, Class. Journ. III. 381.—L. Annæus Seneca, ib. XXXVII. 11, ed. T. Kidd.—Nicander, in Museum Criticum, I. 370, 445, ed. J. H. Monk.—Aristophanes, in Classical Journal, XI. 131, 248, XII. 104, 352, XIII. 132, 336, XIV. 130, ed. G. Burges; and in Museum Criticum, II. 126, ed. J. H. Monk.—Sophocles, Theocritus, Bion, Moschus, ed. E. Maltby in Morell's Thesaurus, reprinted in Classical Journal, XIII. 244.—Philostratus, in Olearius's edition (1709).—Hierocles, in Needham's edition (1709).—Plautus, in E. A. Sonnenschein's ed. of the Captivi, p. 135, Lond. 1880.—Iliad, I. II., at the end of J. Maehly's memoir of Bentley (1868), from the MS. at Trinity College, Cambridge.—Selected Notes on the Greek Testament (from the MS. at Trin. Coll., Camb.), including those on the Epistle to the Galatians, in *Bentleii Critica Sacra*, ed. A. A. Ellis, Camb. 1862.—A few anecdota from Bentley's MS. notes on Homer (at Trin. Coll., Camb.) are given on page 150.

R. Cumberland's *Memoirs* (4to, 1806, 2nd edition, in 2 vols. 8vo, 1807) deserve to be consulted independently of Monk's quotations from them. The memoir of Bentley by F. A. Wolf, in his *Litterarische Analekten* (pp. 1–89, Berlin, 1816), has the permanent interest of its authorship and its date. Rud's Diary, so useful for a part of Bentley's college history, was edited, with some additional letters, by H. R. Luard for the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, 1860. De Quincey's essay—originally a review of Monk—has every charm of his style; the sometimes whimsical judgments need not be taken too seriously. Hartley Coleridge's comments on Monk's facts may be seen in the short biography of Bentley which he wrote in the *Worthies of Yorkshire and Lancashire* (pp. 65–174). In "Richard Bentley, eine Biographie" (Leipzig, 1868), Jacob Maehly gives a concise sketch for German readers, on

Monk's plan of a continuous chronological narrative, in which notices of the literary works are inserted as they occur.

It is proper to state the points which are distinctive of the present volume: 1. In regard to the external facts of Bentley's life, I have been able to add some traits or illustrations from contemporary or other sources: these are chiefly in chapters I. III. VII. XII.—2. Chapter VI. is condensed from some results of studies in the University life of Bentley's time, and in the history of Trinity College.—3. The controversy on the Letters of Phalaris has hitherto been most familiar to English readers through De Quincey's essay on Bentley, or the brilliant passage in Macaulay's essay on Temple. Both versions are based on Monk's. The account given here will be found to present some matters under a different light. In such cases the views are those to which I was led by a careful examination of the original sources, and of all the literary evidence which I could find.—4. My aim has been not more to sketch the facts of Bentley's life than to estimate his work, the character of his powers, and his place in scholarship. Here the fundamental materials are Bentley's writings themselves. To these I have given a comparatively large share of the allotted space. My treatment of them has been independent of any predecessor.

The courtesy of the Master of Trinity afforded me an opportunity of using Bentley's marginal notes on Homer at a time when they would not otherwise have been accessible. Mr. Tyrrell, Regius Professor of Greek in the University of Dublin, favoured me with information regarding a manuscript in the Library.

Prof. A. Michaelis, of Strassburg, and Mr. J. W. Clark, of Trinity College, Cambridge, kindly lent me some books and tracts relating to Bentley.

My thanks are especially due to Dr. Hort, for reading the proof-sheets of chapter x.; and to Mr. Munro, for reading those of chapters viii. and ix. To both I have owed most valuable suggestions. For others, on many points, I have been indebted to Dr. Luard, Registrary of the University of Cambridge; who, with a kindness which I cannot adequately acknowledge, has done me the great favour of reading the whole book during its passage through the press.

The College, Glasgow,
February, 1882.

ANNALS OF BENTLEY'S LIFE.

	Æt.	I. Earlier Period.—**1662–1699.**
1662		Jan. 27. Birth.
1672	**10**	Goes to Wakefield School.
1676	**14**	Enters St. John's Coll., Cambridge.
1680	**18**	B.A. Degree.
1682	**20**	Master of Spalding School. Tutor to J. Stillingfleet.
1683	**21**	M.A. Degree.
1685	**23**	**James II.**
1689	**27**	**William and Mary.** Goes with J. Stillingfleet to Oxford.
1690	**28**	Ordained. Chaplain to Bp. Stillingfleet.
1691	**29**	*Letter to Mill.*
1692	**30**	*Boyle Lectures.* Prebendary of Worcester. Temple's *Essay.*
1693	**31**	*Fragments of Callimachus.* Nominated King's Librarian.
1694	**32**	Appointed, April 12. Wotton's *Reflections.*
1695	**33**	Chaplain in Ordinary to King.—F.R.S.—Boyle's *Phalaris.*
1696	**34**	Promotes reparation of Camb. Press.—D.D.
1697	**35**	First essay on Phalaris in 2nd ed. of Wotton.
1698	**36**	Jan. "*Boyle against Bentley.*"
1699	**37**	Mar. "*Bentley against Boyle.*"—Master of Trin. Coll., Camb.
		II. At Cambridge.—**1700–1742.**
1700	**38**	Feb. 1. Installed at Trin.—Vice-Chancellor.
1701	**39**	Jan. 7. Marriage.—Archdeacon of Ely.

	Æt.	
1702	40	**Anne.**
1702-4	40-2	College Reforms.—Swift's *Battle of the Books* (1704).
1706-8	44-6	Aids L. Küster, T. Hemsterhuys.
1710	48	Feb. 10. Petition from Fellows of Trin. to Bp. Moore. *Menander and Philemon.*—Thornhill's portrait of B.
1711	49	Dec. 8. *Horace.*
1713	51	Bp. cites B. to Ely House. *Remarks* in reply to Collins.
1714	52	First Trial at Ely House.—July 31 Bp. Moore dies before judgment has been given. Aug. 1. Death of Queen Anne. **George I.**
1715	53	Jacobite Revolt. B.'s *Sermon on Popery.*
1716	54	Petition from Fellows of Trin. to Crown.
1717	55	B. Regius Prof. of Divinity. George I. visits Cambridge.
1718	56	B. arrested. Deprived of Degrees by Senate (Oct. 17).
1719	57	B. makes terms with Miller.
1720	58	*Proposals* for edition of New Testament.
1724	62	Mar. 26. B.'s degrees restored.—Declines see of Bristol.
1725	63	B.'s Latin speech at Commencement.
1726	64	*Terence* published.
1727	65	**George II.** Death of Newton.
1728	66	George II. at Cambridge.—B.'s illness.—Colbatch active.
1729	67	Bp. Greene cites B. to appear. Veto by King's Bench.
1730	68	Senate House opened.
1731	69	Fire at Cottonian Library.
1732	70	B.'s edition of *Paradise Lost.* He undertakes Homer.
1733	71	Second Trial at Ely House.
1734	72	April 27. Bp. Greene sentences B. to deprivation.
1735-7	73-5	Efforts to procure execution of the judgment.
1738	76	April 22. End of the struggle. B. remains in possession.
1739	77	*Manilius.*
1740	78	Death of Mrs. Bentley.
1742	80	March. Pope's enlarged *Dunciad*, with verses on B. June. B. examines for the Craven. July 14. His death.

Dates of some Principal Works.

1691	29	Letter to Mill.
1692	30	Boyle Lectures.
1693	31	Fragments of Callimachus.
1699	37	Enlarged Dissertation on Phalaris.
1710	48	Emendations on Menander and Philemon.
1711	49	Horace.
1713	51	Remarks on a late Discourse of Free-thinking.
1726	64	Terence.
1732	70	Edition of *Paradise Lost.*
1739	77	Manilius.

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BENTLEY.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE.—THE LETTER TO MILL.

Richard Bentley was born on January 27, 1662. A remarkable variety of interest belongs to his life of eighty years. He is the classical critic whose thoroughly original genius set a new example of method, and gave a decisive bent to the subsequent course of scholarship. Amongst students of the Greek Testament he is memorable as the first who defined a plan for constructing the whole text directly from the oldest documents. His English style has a place of its own in the transition from the prose of the seventeenth century to that of the eighteenth. During forty years he was the most prominent figure of a great English University at a stirring period. And everything that he did or wrote bears a vivid impress of personal character. The character may alternately attract and repel; it may provoke a feeling in which indignation is tempered only by a sense of the ludicrous, or it may irresistibly appeal to our admiration; but at all moments and in all moods it is signally masterful.

His birthplace was Oulton, a township in the parish of Rothwell, near Wakefield, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. His family were yeomen of the richer class, who for some generations had held property in the neighbourhood of Halifax. Bentley's grandfather had been a captain in the Royalist army during the civil war, and had died whilst a prisoner in the hands of the enemy. The Bentleys suffered in fortune for their attachment to the Cavalier party, but Thomas Bentley, Richard's father, still owned a small estate at Woodlesford, a village in the same parish as Oulton. After the death of his first wife, Thomas Bentley, then an elderly man, married in 1661 Sarah, daughter of Richard Willie, of Oulton, who is described as a stone-mason, but seems to have been rather what would now be called a builder, and must have been in pretty good circumstances; he is said to have held a major's commission in the royal army during the troubles. It was after him that his daughter's first-born was called Richard. Bentley's literary assailants in later years endeavoured to represent him as a sort of ploughboy who had been developed into a learned boor; whilst his amiable and accomplished grandson, Richard Cumberland, exhibited a pardonable tendency to over-estimate the family claims. Bentley himself appears to have said nothing on the subject.

He was taught Latin grammar by his mother. From a day-school at Methley, a village near Oulton, he was sent to the Wakefield Grammar School—probably when he was not more than eleven years old, as he went to Cambridge at fourteen. School-boy life must have been more cheerful after the Restoration than it had been before, to judge from that lively picture in North's "Lives" of the school at Bury St. Edmund's, where the master—a staunch Royal-

ist—was forced, "in the dregs of time," to observe "superhypocritical fastings and seekings," and "walked to church after his brigade of boys, there to endure the infliction of divers holdersforth." Then the King came to his own again, and this scholastic martyr had the happy idea of "publishing his cavaliership by putting all the boys at his school into red cloaks;" "of whom he had near thirty to parade before him, through that observing town, to church; which made no vulgar appearance." The only notice of Bentley's school-life by himself (so far as I know) is in Cumberland's *Memoirs*, and is highly characteristic. "I have had from him at times whilst standing at his elbow"—says his grandson, who was then a boy about nine years old—"a complete and entertaining narrative of his school-boy days, with the characters of his different masters very humorously displayed, and the punishments described which they at times would wrongfully inflict upon him for seeming to be idle and regardless of his task—*When the dunces*, he would say, *could not discover that I was pondering it in my mind, and fixing it more firmly in my memory, than if I had been bawling it out amongst the rest of my school-fellows.*" However, he seems to have retained through life a warm regard for Wakefield School. It had a high reputation. Another of its pupils, a few years later, was John Potter, author of the once popular work on Greek antiquities, editor of Lycophron, and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.

Bentley was only thirteen when his father died. His grandfather, Richard Willie, decided that he should go to the University without much more delay. The boy had his own way to make; his father's small estate had been left to a son by the first marriage; and in those days there was nothing to hinder a precocious lad from matriculating

at fourteen, though the ordinary age was already seventeen or eighteen. On May 24, 1676, "Ricardus Bentley de Oulton" was enrolled in the Admission Book of St. John's College. The choice of a University may have been influenced by the fact that John Baskervile, the master of Wakefield School, was a member of Emmanuel College, Cambridge; the choice of a College, partly by the fact that some scholarships for natives of Yorkshire had been founded at St. John's by Sir Marmaduke Constable. Bentley, like Isaac Newton at Trinity, entered as a subsizar, a student who receives certain allowances. St. John's College was just then the largest in the University, and appears to have been as efficient as it was distinguished. The only relic of Bentley's undergraduate life is a copy of English verses on the Gunpowder Plot. That stirring theme was long a stock subject for College exercises. Bentley's verses have the jerky vigour of a youth whose head is full of classical allusions, and who is bent on making points. The social life of the University probably did not engage very much of his time; and it is left to us to conjecture how much he saw of two Cambridge contemporaries who afterwards wrote against him—Richard Johnson, of his own College, and Garth, the poet, of Peterhouse; or of William Wotton, his firm friend in later life —that "juvenile prodigy" who was a boy of fourteen when Bentley took his degree, and yet already a Bachelor of Arts.

Nothing is known of Bentley's classical studies whilst he was an undergraduate. His own statement, that some of his views on metrical questions dated from earliest manhood (*iam ab adolescentia*), is too vague to prove anything. Monk remarks that there were no prizes for classics at Cambridge then. It may be observed, however,

that there was one very important prize—the Craven University Scholarship, founded in 1647. But no competition is recorded between 1670, when Bentley was eight years old, and 1681, the year after he took his first degree. The studies of the Cambridge Schools were Logic, Ethics, Natural Philosophy, and Mathematics. Bentley took high honours in these. His place was nominally sixth in the first class, but really third, since three of those above him were men of straw. The Vice-chancellor and the two Proctors then possessed the privilege of interpolating one name each in the list, simply as a compliment, and they naturally felt that such a compliment was nothing if it was not courageous. Bentley's degree had no real likeness, of course, to that of third Wrangler now; modern Mathematics were only beginning, and the other subjects of the Schools had more weight; the testing process, too, was far from thorough.

Bentley never got a Fellowship. In his time—indeed, until the present century—there were territorial restrictions at almost all Colleges. As a native of Yorkshire, he had been elected to a Constable scholarship, but the same circumstance excluded him from a greater prize. When he graduated, two Fellowships at St. John's were already held by Yorkshiremen, and a third representative of the same county was inadmissible. He was a candidate, indeed, in 1682; but as no person not in Priest's Orders was eligible on that occasion, he must have gone in merely to show what he could do. The College was enabled to recognise him in other ways, however. He was appointed to the mastership of Spalding School in Lincolnshire. At the end of about a year, he quitted this post for one which offered attractions of a different kind. Dr. Stillingfleet—then Dean of St. Paul's, and formerly a

Fellow of St. John's, Cambridge—wanted a tutor for his second son: and his choice fell on Bentley.

A youth of twenty-one, with Bentley's tastes and powers, could scarcely have been placed in a more advantageous position. Stillingfleet was already foremost amongst those scholarly divines who were regarded as the champions of Christianity against deists or materialists, and more particularly as defenders of the English Church against designs which had been believed to menace it since the Restoration. The researches embodied in Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacrae* and other works had for their general aim to place the Anglican religion on the historical basis of primitive times. In the course of his extensive and varied studies, he had gradually formed that noble library—one of the finest private collections then existing in England—which after his death was purchased for Dublin by Archbishop Marsh. Free access to such a library was a priceless boon for Bentley. At the Dean's house he would also meet the best literary society in London; and his "patron"—to use the phrase of that day—received him on a footing which enabled him to profit fully by such opportunities. Stillingfleet could sympathise with the studies of his son's young tutor. In his own early days, after taking his degree at the same College, Stillingfleet had accepted a domestic tutorship, and "besides his attendance on his proper province, the instruction of the young gentleman," had found time to set about writing his *Irenicum*—the endeavour of a sanguine youth to make peace between Presbyterians and Prelacy. A contemporary biographer (Dr. Timothy Goodwin) has thus described Dr. Stillingfleet: "He was tall, graceful, and well-proportioned; his countenance comely, fresh, and awful; in his conversation, cheerful and discreet, obliging, and very instructive." To the day of

his death in 1699 Stillingfleet was Bentley's best friend—the architect, indeed, of his early fortunes.

The next six years, from the twenty-first to the twenty-seventh of his age (1683–1689), were passed by Bentley in Dr. Stillingfleet's family. It was during this period, when he enjoyed much leisure and the use of a first-rate library, that Bentley laid the solid foundations of his learning. He enlarged his study of the Greek and Latin classics, writing notes in the margin of his books as he went along. In those days, it will be remembered, such studies were not facilitated by copious dictionaries of classical biography, geography, and antiquities, or by those well-ordered and comprehensive lexicons which exhibit at a glance the results attained by the labours of successive generations. Bentley now began to make for himself lists of the authors whom he found cited by the ancient grammarians; and it may be observed that a series of detractors, from Boyle's allies to Richard Dawes, constantly twit Bentley with owing all his learning to "indexes." Thus, in a copy of verses preserved by Granger, Bentley figures as

> "Zoilus, tir'd with turning o'er
> Dull indexes, a precious store."

At this time he also studied the New Testament critically. His labours on the Old Testament may be described in his own words: "I wrote, before I was twenty-four years of age, a sort of *Hexapla;* a thick volume in quarto, in the first column of which I inserted every word of the Hebrew Bible alphabetically; and, in five other columns, all the various interpretations of those words in the Chaldee, Syriac, Vulgate, Latin, Septuagint, and Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, that occur in the whole Bible."

Bentley did not take Orders till 1690, when he was

twenty-eight, but he had probably always intended to do so. His delay may have been partly due to the troubles of James II.'s reign. Immediately after the Revolution Dean Stillingfleet was raised to the see of Worcester. His eldest son had gone to Cambridge; but Bentley's pupil, James, was sent to Wadham College, Oxford. Bentley accompanied him thither; and, having taken an *ad eundem* degree of M.A., was placed on the books of Wadham College. He continued to reside at Oxford till the latter part of 1690; and we find him engaged on behalf of the University in negotiations for the purchase of the library which had belonged to Dr. Isaac Voss, Canon of Windsor. This valuable collection—including the books of Gerard John Voss, Isaac's father—ultimately went to Leyden; not, apparently, through any fault of Bentley's, though that was alleged during his controversy with Boyle.

While living at Oxford, Bentley enjoyed access to the Bodleian Library; and, as if his ardour had been stimulated by a survey of its treasures, it is at this time that his literary projects first come into view. "I had decided" (he informs Dr. Mill) "to edit the fragments of all the Greek poets, with emendations and notes, as a single great work." Perhaps even Bentley can scarcely then have realised the whole magnitude of such a task, and would have gauged it more accurately two years later, when he had edited the fragments of Callimachus. Nor was this the only vast scheme that floated before his mind. In a letter to Dr. Edward Bernard (then Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford) he discloses a project of editing three Greek lexicons—those of Hesychius and Suidas, with the *Etymologicum Magnum*—in three parallel columns for each page. These would make three folio

volumes; a fourth volume would contain other lexicons (as those of Julius Pollux, Erotian, and Phrynichus) which did not lend themselves to the arrangement in column. His thoughts were also busy with Philostratus (the Greek biographer of the Sophists)—with Lucretius—and with the astronomical poet Manilius. Bentley excelled all previous scholars in accurate knowledge of the classical metres. His sojourn at Oxford is the earliest moment at which we find a definite notice of his metrical studies. The Baroccian collection in the Bodleian Library contains some manuscripts of the Greek "Hand-book of Metres" which has come down under the name of the grammarian Hephaestion. Bentley now collated these, using a copy of the edition of Turnebus, in which he made some marginal notes; the book is in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge.

When Bentley was thirty-six, he could still say, "I have never published anything yet, but at the desire of others." Before he left Oxford, towards the end of 1690, a friend had already engaged him to appear in print. The Baroccian collection of manuscripts contained the only known copy of a chronicle written in Greek by a certain John of Antioch. He is sometimes called John Malelas, or simply Malelas. This is the Greek form of a Syriac surname similar in import to the Greek *rhetor*—"orator," "eloquent writer." It was given to other literary men also, and merely served to distinguish this John of Antioch from other well-known men of the same name and place. His date is uncertain, but may probably be placed between the seventh and tenth centuries. His chronicle is a work of the kind which was often undertaken by Christian compilers. Beginning from the Creation, he sought to give a chronological sketch of universal

history down to his own time. The work, as extant, is incomplete. It begins with a statement characteristic of its general contents: "After the death of Hephaestus (Vulcan), his son Helius (the Sun) reigned over the Egyptians for the space of 4407 days;" and it breaks off at the year 560 A.D., five years before the death of Justinian. Historically it is worthless, except in so far as it preserves a few notices by writers contemporary with the later emperors; and it has no merit of form. Scaliger once described a similar chronicle as a dust-bin. Yet the mass of rubbish accumulated by John of Antioch includes a few fragments of better things. Not only the classical prose-writers but the classical poets were among his authorities, for he made no attempt to discriminate facts from myths. In several places he preserves the names of lost works. Here and there, too, a bit of classical prose or verse has stuck in the dismal swamp of his text. Eager to reconstruct ancient chronology, the students of the seventeenth century had not overlooked this unattractive author. In the reign of Charles I. two Oxford scholars had successively studied him. John Gregory (who died in 1646) had proved the authorship of the chronicle—mutilated though it was at both ends—by showing that a passage of it is elsewhere quoted as from the chronicle of Malelas. Edmund Chilmead—a man remarkable for his attainments in scholarship, mathematics, and music—translated it into Latin, adding notes. As a Royalist, Chilmead was ejected from Christ Church by the Parliamentary Visitation of 1648. He died in 1653, just as his work was ready to be printed. After the lapse of thirty-eight years, the Curators of the Sheldonian Press resolved in 1690 to edit it. The manuscript chronicle had already gained some repute through the citations of

it by such scholars as Selden, Usher, Pearson, Stanley, Lloyd. It was arranged that an introduction should be written by Humphrey Hody, who had been James Stillingfleet's College tutor at Wadham, and had, like Bentley, been appointed Chaplain to the Bishop of Worcester. He was an excellent scholar, and performed his task in a highly creditable manner. A general supervision of the edition had been entrusted to Dr. John Mill, Principal of St. Edmund Hall, whose learning has an abiding monument in his subsequent edition of the New Testament. One day Mill and Bentley were walking together at Oxford, when the conversation turned on the chronicle of Malelas. Bentley said that he would like to see the book before it was published. Mill consented, on condition that Bentley would communicate any suggestions that might occur to him. The proof-sheets were then sent to Bentley; who shortly afterwards left Oxford, to take up his residence as chaplain with the Bishop of Worcester.

Dr. Mill presently claimed Bentley's promise; and, thus urged, Bentley at length sent his remarks on Malelas, in the form of a Latin Letter addressed to Dr. Mill. He elsewhere says that he had been further pressed to write it by the learned Bishop Lloyd. In June, 1691, the chronicle appeared, with Bentley's Letter to Mill as an appendix. This edition ("Oxonii, e Theatro Sheldoniano") is a moderately thick octavo volume; first stands a note by Hody, on the spelling of the chronicler's surname; then his Prolegomena, filling 64 pages; the Greek text follows, with Chilmead's Latin version in parallel columns, and foot-notes; and the last 98 pages are occupied by Bentley's Letter to Mill.

Briefly observing that he leaves to Hody the question of the chronicler's identity and age, Bentley comes at

once to the text. Malelas had treated Greek mythology as history, interweaving it with other threads of ancient record. Thus, after enumerating some fabulous kings of Attica, he proceeds: "Shortly afterwards, Gideon was leader of Israel. Contemporary with him was the famous lyric poet Orpheus, of Thrace." Malelas then quotes some statements as to the mystic theology taught by Orpheus. One of these is a sentence which, as he gives it, seems to be composed of common words, but is wholly unintelligible. Bentley takes up this sentence. He shows that the deeply corrupted words conceal the names of three mystic divinities in the later Orphic system, symbolical, respectively, of *Counsel*, *Light*, and *Life*. He proves this emendation, as certain as it is wonderful, by quoting a passage from Damascius—the last great Neoplatonist, who lived in the early part of the sixth century, and wrote a treatise called "Questions and Answers on First Principles," in which he sketches the theology of "the current Orphic rhapsodies." This treatise was not even partially printed till 1828; and Bentley quotes it from a manuscript in the library of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He next deals with a group of fictitious "oracles" which Malelas had reduced from hexameter verse into prose of the common dialect, and shows that several of them closely resemble some which he had found in a manuscript at Oxford, entitled "Oracles and Theologies of Greek Philosophers."

Then he turns to those passages in which the chronicle cites the Attic dramatists. He demonstrates the spuriousness of a fragment ascribed to Sophocles. He confirms or corrects the titles of several lost plays which Malelas ascribes to Euripides, and incidentally amends numerous passages which he has occasion to quote. Discursive exuberance of

learning characterises the whole Letter. A single example will serve to illustrate it. Malelas says: "Euripides brought out a play about Pasiphaë." Bentley remarks on this: "I do not speak at random; and I am certain that *no* ancient writer mentions a Pasiphaë of Euripides." The comic poet Alcæus, indeed, composed a piece of that name, which is said to have been exhibited in the same year as the recast *Plutus* of Aristophanes. It is true, however, Bentley adds, that the *story* of Pasiphaë had been handled by Euripides, in a lost play called *The Cretans*. This he proves from a scholiast on the *Frogs* of Aristophanes. But the scholiast himself needs correction: who says that Euripides introduced Aeropè in *The Cretans*. Here he is confounding *The Cretans* with another lost play of Euripides, called the *Women of Crete:* the former dealt with the story of Icarus and Pasiphaë, the latter with that of Aeropè, Atreus, and Thyestes. Porphyry, in his book on Abstinence, quotes nine verses from a play of Euripides, in which the chorus are addressing Minos. Grotius, in his Excerpts from Greek Comedies and Tragedies, had attempted to amend these corrupted verses, and had supposed them to come from the *Women of Crete*. Bentley (incidentally correcting a grammarian) demonstrates that they can have belonged only to *The Cretans*. He then turns to the Greek verses themselves. Grotius had given a Latin version of them, in the same metre. This metre was the anapæstic—one which had been frequently used by the scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, both in translations and in original poems. Bentley points out that one of its most essential laws had been ignored, not only by Grotius, but by the modern Latinists generally, including Joseph Scaliger. The ancients regarded the verses of this metre as forming a continuous

chain; hence the last syllable of a verse was not indifferently long or short, but necessarily one or the other, as if it occurred in the middle of a verse. Thus Grotius had written:

"Quas prisca domos dedit indigena
Quercus Chalyba secta bipenni."

Here the short *a* at the end of *indigena* should be a long syllable, in order to make an anapæst (⏑⏑–). This is known as Bentley's discovery of the *synaphea* ("*connection*") in anapæstic verse. He further illustrates the metre from fragments of the Latin poet Attius—which he amends; one fragment, indeed, he recognises in the prose of Cicero's *Tusculans*. Returning to the fragment of *The Cretans* in Porphyry, which Grotius had handled amiss, Bentley corrects it—with certainty in some points, with rashness in others, but everywhere brilliantly. Nor has he done with the verses yet. They mention the *cypress* as "native" to Crete. This leads Bentley to discuss and amend passages in Pliny's Natural History, in the History of Plants by Theophrastus, and in the geographical work of Solinus.

Elsewhere Malelas refers to the lost *Meleager* of Euripides. Having quoted another mention of it from Hesychius, Bentley takes occasion to show at length the principal causes of error in that lexicon. This is one of the most striking parts of the Letter. Then, in numerous places, he restores proper names which Malelas had defaced. The chronicler says that the earliest dramatists were Themis, Minos, and Auleas. Bentley shows that he means Thespis, Ion of Chios, and Æschylus. Thespis leads him to quote Clement of Alexandria, and to explain some mysterious words by showing that they are specimens of a pastime which consisted in framing a sentence with the twenty-

four letters of the alphabet, each used once only. Speaking of Ion, he gives an exhaustive discussion of that poet's date and writings, verse and prose. The Letter ends with some remarks on the form of the name *Malelas*. Hody had found fault with Bentley for adding the final *s*, which no previous scholar used. Bentley replies that *a* at the end of a foreign name ordinarily became *as* in Greek—as *Agrippas*. And Malelas being the Greek form of a Greek writer's name, we should keep it in Latin and English, just as Cicero says *Lysias*, not *Lysia*. The Latin exceptions are the domesticated names—those of slaves, or of Greeks naturalised by residence: as *Sosia*, *Phania*. But it was objected that *Malela* was a "barbarian" name, and therefore indeclinable. Bentley answers that the Hun Attila appears in Greek writers as *Attilas*—adding half a dozen Huns, Goths, and Vandals. The prejudice in favour of *Malela* arose from a simple cause. The chronicler is mentioned only thrice by Greek writers: two of these three passages happen to have the name in the genitive case, which is *Malela;* the third, however, has the nominative, which is *Malelas*. Mr. Hody was not convinced about the *s*. The note—in four large pages of small print—which precedes his Prolegomena was written after he had read Bentley's argument; and ends with a prayer. Mr. Hody's aspiration is that *he* may always write in a becoming spirit; and, finally, that he may be a despiser of trifles (*nugarum denique contemptor*).

Taken as a whole, Bentley's Letter to Mill is an extraordinary performance for a scholar of twenty-eight in the year 1690. It ranges from one topic to another over almost the whole field of ancient literature. Upwards of sixty Greek and Latin writers, from the earliest to the

latest, are incidentally explained or corrected. There are many curious tokens of the industry with which Bentley had used his months at Oxford. Thus, referring to a manuscript of uncertain origin in the Bodleian Library, "I have made out," he says, "from some iambics at the beginning—almost effaced by age—that it contains the work of the grammarian Theognotus, whom the author of the *Etymologicum Magnum* quotes several times;" and he gives his proof.

It is interesting to see how strongly this first production bears the stamp of that peculiar style which afterwards marked Bentley's criticism. It is less the style of a writer than of a speaker who is arguing in a strain of rough vivacity with another person. The tone is often as if the ancient author was reading his composition aloud to Bentley, but making stupid mistakes through drowsiness or inattention. Bentley pulls him up short; remonstrates with him in a vein of good-humoured sarcasm; points out to him that he can scarcely mean *this*, but—as his own words elsewhere prove—must, no doubt, have meant *that;* and recommends him to think more of logic. Sometimes it is the modern reader whom Bentley addresses, as if begging him to be calm in the face of some tremendous blunder just committed by the ancient author, who is intended to overhear the "aside"—"Do not mind him; he does not really mean it. He is like this sometimes, and makes us anxious; but he has plenty of good-sense, if one can only get at it. Let us see what we can do for him." This colloquial manner, with its alternating appeals to author and reader, in one instance exposed Bentley to an unmerited rebuke from Dr. Monk. Once, after triumphantly showing that John of Antioch supposed the Bœotian Aulis to

be in Scythia, Bentley exclaims, "*Good indeed, Johnny!*" (Euge vero, ὦ Ἰωαννίδιον). Dr. Monk thought that this was said to Dr. John Mill, and reproved it as "an indecorum which neither the familiarity of friendship nor the license of a dead language can justify towards the dignified Head of a House." Mr. Maehly, in a memoir of Bentley, rejoins: "That may be the view of English high life; a German savant would never have been offended by the expressions in question." (Das mag Anschauung des englischen *high life* sein: einem deutschen Gelehrten würden die fraglichen Ausdrücke nie aufgefallen sein.) But our Aristarchus was not addressing the Principal of St. Edmund Hall; he was sportively upbraiding the ancient chronicler. Indeed, Monk's slip—a thing most rare in his work—was pointed out in a review of his first edition, and is absent from the second.

Two of the first scholars of that day—John George Graevius and Ezechiel Spanheim—separately saluted the young author of the Letter to Mill as "a new and already bright star" of English letters. But the Letter to Mill received by far its most memorable tribute, years after Bentley's death, from David Ruhnken, in his preface to the Hesychius of Alberti. "Those great men," he says—meaning such scholars as Scaliger, Casaubon, Saumaise—"did not dare to say openly what they thought (about Hesychius), whether deterred by the established repute of the grammarian, or by the clamours of the half-learned, who are always noisy against their betters, and who were uneasy at the notion of the great Hesychius losing his pre-eminence. In order that the truth should be published and proved, we needed the learned daring of Richard Bentley—daring which here, if anywhere, served literature

better than the sluggish and credulous superstition of those who wish to be called and deemed critics. Bentley shook off the servile yoke, and put forth that famous *Letter to Mill*—a wonderful monument of genius and learning, such as could have come only from the first critic of his time."

CHAPTER II.

THE BOYLE LECTURES.

Robert Boyle, born in the year after Bacon's death (1627), stands next to him among the Englishmen of the seventeenth century who advanced inductive science. His experiments—"physico-mechanical," as he describes them—led to the discovery of the law for the elasticity of the air; improvements in the air-pump and the thermometer were due to him; and his investigations were serviceable to Hydrostatics, Chemistry, and Medicine. In his theological writings it was his chief aim to show "the reconcilableness of reason and religion," and thus to combat the most powerful prejudice which opposed the early progress of the New Philosophy. Boyle's mind, like Newton's, became more profoundly reverent the further he penetrated into the secrets of nature; his innermost feeling appears to be well represented by the title which he chose for one of his essays—"On the high veneration man's intellect owes to God, peculiarly for his wisdom and power." Thus his "Disquisition of Final Causes" was designed to prove, as against inferences which had been drawn from the cosmical system of Descartes, that the structure of the universe reveals the work of a divine intelligence. Dying on December 30, 1691, he left a bequest which was in har-

mony with the main purpose of his life, and which might be regarded as his personal and permanent protest against the idea that a servant of science is an enemy of religion.

He assigned fifty pounds a year as a stipend "for some divine, or preaching minister," who should "preach eight Sermons in the year for proving the Christian religion against notorious infidels, viz. Atheists, Deists, Pagans, Jews, and Mahometans; *not descending to any controversies that are among Christians themselves:* The lectures to be on the first Monday of the respective months of January, February, March, April, May, September, October, November; in such church as the trustees shall from time to time appoint." The four trustees named in the will—Bishop Tenison, Sir Henry Ashurst, Sir John Rotheram, and John Evelyn (the author of the *Sylva* and the *Diary*)—soon appointed the Lecturer who was to deliver the first course. "We made choice of one Mr. Bentley," says Evelyn—"chaplain to the Bishop of Worcester." Bishop Stillingfleet, himself so eminent an apologist, would naturally be consulted in such an election.

Bentley took for his subject the first of the topics indicated by the founder—"A confutation of Atheism." At this time the *Leviathan* of Thomas Hobbes had been forty years before the world: and Bentley's lectures stand in a peculiar relation to it. Hobbes resolved all ideas into sensations; he denied that there was "any common rule of good and evil, to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves." He did *not*, however, deny the existence of a God. "Curiosity about causes," says Hobbes, "led men to search out, one after the other, till they came to the necessary conclusion, that there is some eternal cause which men called God. But they have no more idea of his nature than a blind man has of fire, though he

knows that there is something which warms him." So elsewhere he distinguishes between the necessary "acknowledgment of one infinite, omnipotent, and eternal God," and the attempt—which he pronounces delusive—to define the nature of that Being "by spirit incorporeal."

Bentley held with those who regarded Hobbes, not merely as a materialist who destroyed the basis of morality, but as an atheist in the disguise of a deist. Writing to Bernard, Bentley says roundly of Hobbes, "his corporeal God is a meer sham to get his book printed." Hobbes had said—not in the *Leviathan*, but in "An Answer to Bishop Bramhall," who had pressed him on this point—"I maintain God's existence, and that he is a most pure and most simple *corporeal spirit*:" adding, "by corporeal I mean a substance that has magnitude." Elsewhere he adds "*invisible*" before "corporeal." But at this time the suspicion of a tendency was sometimes enough to provoke the charge of atheism: thus Cudworth, in his "*Intellectual System*"—published fourteen years before Bentley's lectures, and, like them, directed mainly against Hobbes—casts the imputation, without a shadow of reason, on Gassendi, Descartes, and Bacon. Bentley declared that atheism was rife in "taverns and coffee-houses, nay Westminster-hall and the very churches." The school of Hobbes, he was firmly persuaded, was answerable for this. "There may be some Spinosists, or immaterial Fatalists, beyond seas," says Bentley; "but not one English infidel in a hundred is any other than a Hobbist; which I know to be rank atheism in the private study and select conversation of those men, whatever it may appear abroad." Bentley's Lectures are, throughout, essentially an argument against Hobbes. The set of the lecturer's thoughts may be seen from an illustration used

in his second discourse, where he is arguing against a fortuitous origin of the universe. "If a man should affirm that an ape, casually meeting with pen, ink, and paper, and falling to scribble, did happen to write exactly the *Leviathan* of Thomas Hobbes, would an atheist believe such a story?"

It was from the pulpit of St. Martin's Church, in London, that Bentley delivered his Boyle Lectures. The first was given on March 7, 1692. Bentley announces that his refutation of atheists will not be drawn from those sacred books which, in their eyes, possess no special authority; "but, however, there are other books extant, which they must needs allow of as proper evidence; even the mighty volumes of visible nature, and the everlasting tables of right reason; wherein, if they do not wilfully shut their eyes, they may read their own folly written by the finger of God, in a much plainer and more terrible sentence than Belshazzar's was by the hand upon the wall."

In choosing this ground Bentley was following a recent example. Richard Cumberland, afterwards Bishop of Peterborough, had published in 1672 his "Philosophical Disquisition on the Laws of Nature"—arguing, against the school of Hobbes, that certain immutable principles of moral choice are inherent in the nature of things and in the mind of man. He purposely refrains, however, from appealing to Scripture: the testimony which Cumberland invokes is that of recent science, mathematical or physiological—of Descartes and Huygens, of Willis or Harvey. It is characteristic of Bentley that he chose to draw his weapons from the same armoury. He was already a disciple of strictly theological learning. But in this field, as in others, he declined to use authority as a refuge from logical encounter.

Bentley's first Lecture argues that to adopt atheism is "to choose death and evil before life and good;" that such folly is needless, since religion imposes nothing repugnant to man's faculties or incredible to his reason; that it is also hurtful, both to the individual, whom it robs of the best hope, and to communities, since religion is the basis of society. The second Lecture proceeds to deduce the existence of the Deity from the faculties of the human soul. Hobbes had said: "There is no conception in a man's mind which hath not at first, totally or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of sense: the rest are derived from that original." Bentley, on the contrary, undertakes to prove that "the powers of cogitation, and volition, and sensation, are neither inherent in matter as such, nor producible in matter;" but proceed from "some cogitative substance, some incorporeal inhabitant within us, which we call spirit and soul." As the result of the inquiry, he concludes that there is "an immaterial and intelligent Being, that created our souls; which Being was either eternal itself, or created immediately or ultimately by some other Eternal, that has all those perfections. There is, therefore, originally an eternal, immaterial, intelligent Creator; all which together are the attributes of God alone." Evelyn, who was present at this Lecture, writes of it in his *Diary* (April 4, 1692)—"one of the most learned and convincing discourses I had ever heard." From this point we may date the friendship which till his death in 1706 he steadily entertained for Bentley. The third, fourth and fifth Lectures urge the same inference from the origin and structure of human bodies. Bentley seeks to prove that "the human race was neither from everlasting without beginning; nor owes its beginning to the influence of heavenly bodies; nor to

what they call nature, that is, the necessary and mechanical motions of dead senseless matter." His style of argument on the evidence of design in the human structure may be seen from this passage on the organism of the heart:

"If we consider the heart, which is supposed to be the first principle of motion and life, and divide it by our imagination into its constituent parts, its arteries, and veins, and nerves, and tendons, and membranes, and innumerable little fibres that these secondary parts do consist of, we shall find nothing here singular, but what is in any other muscle of the body. 'Tis only the site and posture of these several parts, and the configuration of the whole, that give it the form and functions of a heart. Now, why should the first single fibres in the formation of the heart be peculiarly drawn in spiral lines, when the fibres of all other muscles are made by a transverse rectilinear motion? What could determine the fluid matter into that odd and singular figure, when as yet no other member is supposed to be formed, that might direct the course of that fluid matter? Let mechanism here make an experiment of its power, and produce a spiral and turbinated motion of the whole moved body without an external director."

The last three Lectures (vi., vii., viii.) deal with the proofs from "the origin and frame of the world." These are by far the most striking of the series. Newton's *Principia* had now been published for five years. But, beyond the inner circle of scientific students, the Cartesian system was still generally received. Descartes taught that each planet was carried round the sun in a separate vortex; and that the satellites are likewise carried round by smaller vortices, contained within those of the several

planets. Centrifugal motion would constantly impel the planets to fly off in a straight line from the sun; but they are kept in their orbits by the pressure of an outer sphere, consisting of denser particles which are beyond the action of the vortices.

Newton had demolished this theory. He had shown that the planets are held in their orbits by the force of *gravity*, which is always drawing them towards the sun, combined with a *transverse impulse*, which is always projecting them at tangents to their orbits. Bentley takes up Newton's great discovery, and applies it to prove the existence of an Intelligent Providence. Let us grant, he says, that the force of gravity is inherent to matter. What can have been the origin of that other force—the transverse impulse? This impulse is not uniform, but has been adjusted to the place of each body in the system. Each planet has its particular velocity, proportioned to its distance from the sun and to the quantity of the solar matter. It can be due to one cause alone—an intelligent and omnipotent Creator.

This view has the express sanction of Newton. His letters to Bentley — subsequent in date to the Lectures —repeatedly confirm it. "I do not know any power in nature," Newton writes, "which would cause this transverse motion without the divine arm." . . . "To make this system, with all its motions, required a cause which understood and compared together the quantities of matter in the several bodies of the sun and planets, and the gravitating powers resulting from thence; the several distances of the primary planets from the sun, and of the secondary ones from Saturn, Jupiter, and the Earth; and the velocities with which these planets could revolve about those quantities of matter in the central bodies; and to com-

pare and adjust all these things together, in so great a variety of bodies, argues that cause to be, not blind and fortuitous, but very well skilled in mechanics and geometry."

The application of Newton's discoveries which Bentley makes in the Boyle Lectures was peculiarly welcome to Newton himself. "When I wrote my treatise about our system," he says to Bentley, "I had an eye upon such principles as might work with considering men for the belief of a Deity; and nothing can rejoice me more than to find it useful for that purpose. But if I have done the public any service this way, it is due to nothing but industry and patient thought."

The correspondence between Bentley and Newton, to which the Boyle Lectures gave rise, would alone make them memorable. It has commonly been supposed that Bentley first studied the *Principia* with a view to these Lectures. This, as I can prove, is an error. The Library of Trinity College, Cambridge, contains the autographs of Newton's four letters to Bentley, and of his directions for reading the *Principia;* also a letter to Wotton from John Craig, a Scottish mathematician, giving advice on the same subject, for Bentley's benefit. Now, Craig's letter is dated June 24, 1691; Bentley, then, must have turned his mind to the *Principia* six months before the Boyle Lectures were even founded. We know, further, that in 1689 he was working on Lucretius. I should conjecture, then, that his first object in studying Newton's cosmical system had been to compare it with that of Epicurus, as interpreted by Lucretius; to whom, indeed, he refers more than once in the Boyle Lectures. Craig gives an alarming list of books which must be read before the *Principia* can be understood, and represents the study as most arduous. Newton's own directions to Bentley are simple and en-

couraging: "at y^e^ first perusal of my Book," he concludes, "it's enough if you understand y^e^ Propositions w^th^ some of y^e^ Demonstrations w^ch^ are easier than the rest. For when you understand y^e^ easier, they will afterwards give you light into y^e^ harder." At the bottom of the paper Bentley has written, in his largest and boldest character, "*Directions from Mr. Newton by his own Hand.*" There is no date. Clearly, however, it was Craig's formidable letter which determined Bentley on writing to Newton. The rapidity with which Bentley—amongst all his other pursuits—comprehended the *Principia* proves both industry and power. Some years later, his Lectures were searched for flaws by John Keill, afterwards Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, and the principal agent in introducing Newton's system there. The Phalaris controversy was going on, and Keill wished to damage Bentley. But he could find only one real blot. Bentley had missed Newton's discovery—mentioned, but not prominent, in the *Principia*—that the moon revolves about her own axis. Keill's only other point was a verbal cavil, refuted by the context. Better testimony to Bentley's accuracy could scarcely have been borne.

The last Lecture was given on December 5, 1692. The first six had already been printed. But before publishing the last two—which dealt in more detail with Newton's principles—Bentley wished to consult Newton himself. He therefore wrote to him, at Trinity College, Cambridge. It was in the autumn of that year that Newton had finished his Letters on Fluxions. He was somewhat out of health, suffering from sleeplessness and loss of appetite; perhaps (as his letters to Locke suggest) vexed by the repeated failure of his friends to obtain for him such a provision as he desired. But he at once answered Bentley's

letter with that concise and lucid thoroughness which makes his style a model in its kind. His first letter is dated Dec. 10, 1692, and addressed to Bentley "at the Bishop of Worcester's House, in Park Street in Westminster." On the back of it Bentley has written: "Mr Newton's Answer to some Queries sent by me, after I had preach't my 2 last Sermons; All his answers are agreeable to what I had deliver'd before in the pulpit. But of some incidental things I do ἐπέχειν [suspend judgment]. R. B." Three other letters are extant which Newton wrote at this time to Bentley—the last on Feb. 25, 1693. He probably wrote others also; there are several from Bentley to him in the Portsmouth collection.

In the course of these four letters, Newton approves nearly all the arguments for the existence of God which Bentley had deduced from the *Principia*. On one important point, however, he corrects him. Bentley had conceded to the atheists that gravity may be essential and inherent to matter. "Pray," says Newton, "do not ascribe that notion to me; for the cause of gravity is what I do not pretend to know, and therefore would take more time to consider of it." In the last letter, about five weeks later, Newton returns to this topic, and speaks more decidedly. The notion of gravity being inherent to matter "is to me," he says, "so great an absurdity, that I believe no man, who has in philosophical matters any competent faculty of thinking, can ever fall into it. Gravity must be caused by an agent acting constantly according to certain laws; but whether this agent be material or immaterial, I have left to the consideration of my readers."

One of the most interesting points in these letters is to see how a mind like Bentley's, so wonderfully acute in

certain directions, and logical in criticism even to excess, is corrected by a mathematical mind. Thus Bentley, in writing to Newton, had argued that every particle of matter in an infinite space has an infinite quantity of matter on all sides, and consequently an infinite attraction every way; it must therefore rest in equilibrium, all infinites being equal. Now, says Newton, by similar reasoning we might prove that an inch is equal to a foot. For, if an inch may be divided into an infinite number of parts, the sum of those parts will be an inch; and if a foot may be divided into an infinite number of parts, the sum of those parts must be a foot; and therefore, since all infinites are equal, those sums must be equal; that is, an inch must be equal to a foot. The logic is strict; what, then, is the error in the premises? The position, Newton answers, that all infinites are equal. Infinites may be considered in two ways. Viewed absolutely, they are neither equal nor unequal. But when considered under certain definite restrictions, as mathematics may consider them, they can be compared. "A mathematician would tell you that, though there be an infinite number of infinite little parts in an inch, yet there is twelve times that number of such parts in a foot." And so Bentley's infinite attracting forces must be so conceived as if the addition of the slightest finite attracting force to either would destroy the equilibrium.

Johnson has observed that these letters show "how even the mind of Newton gains ground gradually upon darkness:" a fine remark, but one which will convey an incorrect impression if it is supposed to mean that Bentley's questions had led Newton to modify or extend any doctrine set forth in the *Principia*. Bentley's present object in using the *Principia* was to refute atheism.

Newton had not previously considered all the possible applications of his own discoveries to the purposes of theological controversy. This is the limit to the novelty of suggestion which he found in Bentley's letters. Besides the few cases in which Newton points out a fallacy, there are others in which he puts a keener edge on some argument propounded by his correspondent. For instance, Bentley had submitted some reasons against "the hypothesis of deriving the frame of the world by mechanical principles from matter evenly spread through the heavens." This was one of the theories which sought to eliminate the necessity of an intelligent cause. It was, of course, radically incompatible with Newton's system. "I had considered it very little," Newton writes, "before your letters put me upon it." But then he goes on to point out how it may be turned against its authors. It involves the assumption that gravity is inherent to matter. But, if this is so, then matter could never have been evenly spread through the heavens without the intervention of a supernatural power.

Newton's letters, while they heighten our admiration for the master, also illustrate the great ability of the disciple—his strong grasp of a subject which lay beyond the sphere of his familiar studies, and his vigorous originality in the use of new acquisitions. Bentley's Boyle Lectures have a lasting worth which is independent of their scientific value as an argument. In regard to the latter, it may be observed that they bear the mark of their age in their limited conception of a natural law as distinguished from a personal agency. Thus gravitation is allowed as a natural "law" because its action is constant and uniform. But wherever there is a more and a less, wherever the operation is apparently variable, this is explained by the in-

tervening will of an intelligent person; it is not conceived that the disturbing or modifying force may be another, though unknown, "law," in the sense in which that name is given to a manifestly regular sequence of cause and effect. On their literary side, the best parts of the Lectures exhibit Bentley as a born controversialist, and the worst as a born litigant. The latter character appears in an occasional tendency to hair-splitting and quibbling; the former, in his sustained power of terse and animated reasoning, in rapid thrust and alert defence, in ready command of various resources, in the avoidance of declamation while he is proving his point, and in the judicious use of eloquence to clinch it. Here, as elsewhere, he has the knack of illustrating an abstruse subject by an image from common things. He is touching (in the second Lecture) on the doctrine of Epicurus that our freedom of will is due to the declension of atoms from the perpendicular as they fall through infinite space. "'Tis as if one should say that a bowl equally poised, and thrown upon a plain and smooth bowling-green, will run necessarily and fatally in a direct motion; but if it be made with a bias, that may decline it a little from a straight line, it may acquire by that motion a liberty of will, and so run spontaneously to the jack." It may be noticed that a passage in the eighth Lecture is one of the quaintest testimonies in literature to the comparatively recent origin of a taste for the grander forms of natural scenery. Bentley supposes his adversaries to object that "the rugged and irregular surface" of the earth refutes its claim to be "a work of divine artifice." "We ought not to believe," he replies, "that the banks of the ocean are really deformed, because they have not the form of a regular bulwark; nor that the mountains are out of shape, because they are not exact pyramids or cones."

The Lectures made a deep and wide impression. Soon after they had been published, a Latin version appeared at Berlin. A Dutch version subsequently came out at Utrecht. There was one instance, indeed, of dissent from the general approval. A Yorkshire squire wrote a pamphlet, intimating that his own experience did not lead him to consider the faculties of the human soul as a decisive argument for the existence of a Deity; and, referring to Bentley's observations on this head, he remarked, "I judge he hath taken the wrong sow by the ear." In 1694 Bentley again delivered a course of Boyle Lectures—"A Defence of Christianity"—but they were never printed. Manuscript copies of them are mentioned by Kippis, the editor of the *Biographia Britannica* (1780); but Dean Vincent, who died in 1815, is reported by Kidd as believing that they were lost.

CHAPTER III.

LEARNED CORRESPONDENCE.—THE KING'S LIBRARIAN.

In 1692—the year of his first Boyle Lecturership—an accident placed Bentley in correspondence with John George Graevius, a German who held a professorship at Utrecht, and stood in the front rank of classical—especially Latin—scholarship. When Bentley was seeking materials for an edition of Manilius, he received a box of papers from Sir Edward Sherburn, an old Cavalier who had partly translated the poet. The papers in the box, bought at Antwerp, had belonged to the Dutch scholar, Gaspar Gevärts. Amongst them was a Latin tract by Albert Rubens ("Rubenius,") the author of another treatise which Graevius had previously edited. Bentley, with Sherburn's leave, sent the newly-found tract to Graevius, who published it in 1694, with a dedication to Bentley. This circumstance afterwards brought on Bentley the absurd charge of having intercepted an honour due to Sherburn.

Graevius was rejoiced to open a correspondence with the author of the Letter to Mill, which he had warmly admired. The professor's son had lately died, leaving an unpublished edition of the Greek poet Callimachus, which Graevius was now preparing to edit. He applied to Bentley for any literary aid that he could give. In reply.

Bentley undertook to collect the fragments of Callimachus, scattered up and down throughout Greek literature; remarking that he could promise to double the number printed in a recent Paris edition, and also to improve the text. In 1696 Bentley fulfilled this promise by sending to Graevius a collection of about 420 fragments; also a new recension of the poet's epigrams, with additions to their number from a fresh manuscript source, and with some notes on the hymns. The edition appeared at Utrecht in 1697, with Bentley's contributions.

In the preface Graevius shows his sense that the work done by Bentley—"that new and brilliant light of Britain"—was not merely excellent in quality, but of a new order. Such indeed it was. Since then, successive generations have laboured at collecting and sifting the fragments of the Greek poets. But in 1697 the world had no example of systematic work in this field. The first pattern of thorough treatment and the first model of critical method were furnished by Bentley's Callimachus. Hitherto the collector of fragments had aimed at little more than heaping together "the limbs of the dismembered poet." Bentley shows how these limbs, when they have been gathered, may serve, within certain limits, to reconstruct the body. Starting from a list of the poet's works, extant or known by title, he aims at arranging the fragments under those works to which they severally belonged. But, while he concentrates his critical resources in a methodical manner, he wisely refrains from pushing conjecture too far. His Callimachus is hardly more distinguished by brilliancy than by cautious judgment—praise which could not be given to all his later works. Here, as in the Letter to Mill, we see his metrical studies bearing fruit: thus he points out a fact which had hitherto es-

caped even such scholars as Saumaise and Casaubon—that the Greek diphthongs *ai* and *oi* cannot be shortened before consonants. Ernesti, in the preface to his Callimachus (1763), speaks of Bentley as "having distanced competition:" and another estimate, of yet higher authority, is expressed more strongly still. "Nothing more excellent in its kind has appeared," said Valckenaer—"nothing more highly finished;" "a most thorough piece of work, by which writers who respect their readers might well be deterred" from an attempt at rivalry. It is no real abatement of Bentley's desert that a few gleanings were left for those who came after him. Here, as in some other cases, the distinctive merit of his work is not that it was final, but that it was exemplary. In this particular department—the editing of fragments—he differed from his predecessors as the numismatist, who arranges a cabinet of coins, differs from the digger who is only aware that he has unearthed an old bit of gold or silver.

Meanwhile letters had been passing between Bentley and a correspondent very unlike Gravius. In 1693 Joshua Barnes, of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, was editing Euripides, and wrote to Bentley, asking his reasons for an opinion attributed to him—that the "Letters of Euripides" were spurious. Bentley gave these reasons in a long and courteous reply. Barnes, however, resented the loss of a cherished illusion. Not only did he omit to thank Bentley, but in the preface to his Euripides (1694) he alluded to his correspondent's opinion as "a proof of effrontery or incapacity." Barnes is a curious figure, half comic, half pathetic, amongst the minor persons of Bentley's story. Widely read, incessantly laborious, but uncritical and vain, he poured forth a continual stream of injudicious publications, English or Greek, until, when he

was fifty-one, they numbered forty-three. The last work of his life was an elaborate edition of Homer. He had invested the fortune of Mrs. Barnes in this costly enterprise, obtaining her somewhat reluctant consent, it was said, by representing the "Iliad" as the work of King Solomon. Queen Anne declined the dedication, and nothing could persuade poor Barnes that this was not Bentley's doing. Bentley said of Barnes that he probably knew about as much Greek, and understood it about as well, as an Athenian blacksmith. The great critic appears to have forgotten that Sophocles and Aristophanes were appreciated by audiences which represented the pit and the gallery much more largely than the boxes and the stalls. An Athenian blacksmith could teach us a good many things.

Bentley had now made his mark, and he had powerful friends. One piece of preferment after another came to him. In 1692 Bishop Stillingfleet procured for him a prebendal stall at Worcester, and three years later appointed him to hold the Rectory of Hartlebury, in that county, until James Stillingfleet should be in full orders. At the end of the year 1693 the office of Royal Librarian became vacant. By an arrangement which was not then thought singular, the new Librarian was induced to resign in favour of Bentley, who was to pay him £130 a year out of the salary of £200. The patent appointing Bentley Keeper of the Royal Libraries bore date April 12, 1694. The "Licensing Act" (Stat. 13 and 14, Car. II.) finally expired in 1694, a few months after Bentley took office. But he made the most of his time. The Act reserved three copies of every book printed in England—one for the Royal Library, one for Oxford, and one for Cambridge. Latterly it had been evaded. Bentley applied to the Master of the Stationers' Company, and exacted "*near a thousand*" vol-

umes. In this year he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. In 1695 he became a Chaplain in ordinary to the King. Hitherto he had resided with Bishop Stillingfleet; but early in 1696 he took possession of the rooms in St. James's Palace which were assigned to the Royal Librarian.

One of his letters to Evelyn—whom he had been helping to revise his *Numismata*, a "Discourse on Medals, ancient and modern"—discloses an amusing incident. Bentley's lodgings at St. James's were next the Earl of Marlborough's. Bentley wished to annex some rooms overhead, for the better bestowal of certain rare books. Marlborough undertook to plead his cause. The result of this obliging diplomacy was that the future hero of Blenheim got "the closets" for himself. Bentley now became anxious to build a new library, and Evelyn warmly sympathises with his "glorious enterprise." It was, indeed, much needed. The books were so ill-lodged that they could not be properly arranged; Bentley declared that the library was "not fit to be seen;" and he kept its chief treasure, the Alexandrine MS. of the Greek Bible, at his own rooms in the palace, "for this very reason, that persons might see it without seeing the library." The Treasury consented to the proposal for building. But public business prevented the bill coming before Parliament, and the scheme was dropped for the time. Meanwhile Bentley's energy found scope at Cambridge. Since the civil troubles, the University Press had lapsed into a state which called for reparation. Bentley took an active part in procuring subscriptions for that purpose. He was empowered by the University to order new founts of type, which were cast in Holland. Evelyn, in his *Diary* (Aug. 17, 1696), alludes to "that noble presse which my worthy and most learned

friend . . . is with greate charge and industrie erecting now at Cambridge." In the same year Bentley took the degree of Doctor in Divinity. On Commencement Sunday (July 5, 1696) he preached before the University, taking as his text 1 Pet. iii. 15. The sermon, which is extant, defends Christianity against deism.

It is natural to ask—was Bentley yet remarked for any of those qualities which form the harsher side of his character in later life? He was now thirty-four. There is the story of the dinner-party at Bishop Stillingfleet's, at which the guest, who had been sitting next Bentley, said to the Bishop after dinner, "My Lord, that chaplain of yours is certainly a very extraordinary man." (Mr. Bentley, like the chaplain in "Esmond," had doubtless conformed to the usage of the time, and retired when the custards appeared.) "Yes," said Stillingfleet, "had he but the gift of humility, he would be the most extraordinary man in Europe." If this has a certain flavour of concoction, at any rate there is no doubt as to what Pepys wrote, after reading Boyle's allusion to Bentley's supposed discourtesy. "I suspect Mr. Boyle is in the right; for our friend's learning (which I have a great value for) wants a little filing." Against such hints there is a noteworthy fact to be set. A letter of Bentley's to Evelyn, dated Oct. 21, 1697, mentions that a small group of friends had arranged to meet in the evenings, once or twice a week, at Bentley's lodgings in St. James's. These are the names: John Evelyn, Sir Christopher Wren, John Locke, Isaac Newton. A person with whom such men chose to place themselves in frequent and familiar intercourse must have been distinguished by something else than insolent erudition. But now we must see how Bentley bore himself in the first great crisis of his career.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONTROVERSY ON THE LETTERS OF PHALARIS.

William Wotton's *Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning* (1694) give the best view of a discussion which greatly exercised the wits of the day. "Soon after the Restauration of King Charles II.," says Wotton, "upon the institution of the Royal Society, the comparative excellency of the Old and New Philosophy was eagerly debated in England. But the disputes then managed between Stubbe and Glanvile were rather particular, relating to the Royal Society, than general, relating to knowledge in its utmost extent. In France this controversy has been taken up more at large. The French were not content to argue the point in Philosophy and Mathematicks, but even in Poetry and Oratory too; where the Ancients had the general opinion of the learned on their side. Monsieur de Fontenelle, the celebrated author of a Book concerning the Plurality of Worlds, began the dispute about six years ago [1688], in a little Discourse annexed to the *Pastorals*."

Perrault, going further still than Fontenelle, "in oratory sets the Bishop of Meaux [Bossuet] against Pericles (or rather Thucydides), the Bishop of Nismes [Fléchier] against Isocrates, F. Bourdaloue against Lysias, Monsieur Voiture against Pliny, and Monsieur Balzac against Cicero. In

Poetry likewise he sets Monsieur Boileau against Horace, Monsieur Corneille and Monsieur Molière against the Ancient Dramatic Poets."

Sir William Temple, in his "Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning"—published in 1692, and dedicated to his own University, *Almæ Matri Cantabrigiensi*—was not less uncompromising in the opposite direction. His general view is that the Ancients surpassed the Moderns, not merely in art and literature, but also in every branch of science, though the records of their science have perished. "The Moderns," Temple adds, "gather all their learning out of Books in the Universities." The Ancients, on the contrary, travelled with a view to original research, and advanced the limits of knowledge in their subjects by persistent interviews with reserved specialists in foreign parts. Thales and Pythagoras are Sir William's models in this way. "Thales acquired his knowledge in Egypt, Phœnicia, Delphos, and Crete; Pythagoras spent twenty-two years in Egypt, and twelve years more in Chaldæa; and then returned laden with all their stores." Temple's performance was translated into French, and made quite a sensation in the Academy—receiving, amongst other tributes, the disinterested homage of the Modern Horace.

Wotton's object was to act as a mediator, and "give to every side its just due." As to "eloquence and poetry," it required some courage (in England) even to hint that the Moderns had beaten the Ancients. "It is almost a heresie in wit, among our poets, to set up any modern name against Homer or Virgil, Horace or Terence. So that though here and there one should in Discourse prefer the writers of the present age, yet scarce any man among us, who sets a value upon his own reputation, will venture to assert it in print." With regard to science, however,

Wotton speaks out, and in a gentle way disposes of the Ancients. He may, in fact, claim the credit of having made a sensible contribution to the discussion. Sir William Temple, "the ornament of the age," was no mean antagonist. Wotton must have been glad of a trusty ally, especially on the ground of ancient literature, the strongest part of the enemy's position. Such an ally he found in Bentley. Temple had written thus:

"It may perhaps be further affirmed, in favour of the Ancients, that the oldest books we have are still in their kind the best. The two most ancient that I know of in prose, among those we call profane authors, are Æsop's Fables and Phalaris's Epistles, both living near the same time, which was that of Cyrus and Pythagoras. As the first has been agreed by all ages since for the greatest master in his kind, and all others of that sort have been but imitations of his original; so I think the Epistles of Phalaris to have more race, more spirit, more force of wit and genius, than any others I have ever seen, either ancient or modern. I know several learned men (or that usually pass for such, under the name of critics) have not esteemed them genuine; and Politian, with some others, have attributed them to Lucian: but I think he must have little skill in painting that cannot find out this to be an original. Such diversity of passions, upon such variety of actions and passages of life and government; such freedom of thought, such boldness of expression; such bounty to his friends, such scorn of his enemies; such honour of learned men, such esteem of good; such knowledge of life, such contempt of death; with such fierceness of nature and cruelty of revenge, could never be represented but by him that possessed them. And I esteem Lucian to have been no more capable of writing than of acting what Phalaris

did. In all one writ you find the scholar or the sophist; in all the other, the tyrant and the commander."

Mutual admiration and modern journalism have seldom produced a more magnificent advertisement than Sir William Temple had given to this ancient writer. After the slumber, or the doze, of centuries, Phalaris awoke and found himself in demand. The booksellers began to feel an interest in him such as they had never even simulated before.

The "Epistles of Phalaris" are a collection of a hundred and forty-eight letters—many of them only a few lines long—written in "Attic" Greek of that artificial kind which begins to appear about the time of Augustus. They are first mentioned by a Greek writer, Stobæus, who flourished about 480 A.D. We know nothing about the exact time at which they were written. On the other hand there is no doubt as to the class of literature which they represent, or the general limits of the period to which they must be assigned. These limits are roughly marked by the first five centuries of the Christian era.

Phalaris, the reputed author of the Letters, is a shadowy figure in the early legends of ancient Sicily. The modern Girgenti, on the south-west coast of the island, preserves the name of Agrigentum, as the Romans called the Greek city of Akragas. Founded early in the sixth century before Christ by a Dorian colony from Gela, Akragas stood on the spacious terraces of a lofty hill. It was a splendid natural stronghold. Steep cliffs were the city's bulwarks on the south; on the north, a craggy ridge formed a rampart behind it, and the temple-crowned citadel, a precipitous rock, towered to a height of twelve hundred feet above the sea. Story told that Phalaris, a citizen of Akragas, had contrived to seize the citadel, and to make himself abso-

lute ruler of the place—in Greek phrase, "tyrant." He strengthened the city—then recently founded—and was successful in wars upon his neighbours. At last his own subjects rose against him, overthrew his power, and put him to death. This latter event is said to have occurred between 560 and 550 B.C. Such was the tradition. All that we really know about Phalaris, however, is that as early as about 500 B.C. his name had become a proverb for horrible cruelty, not only in Sicily, but throughout Hellas. Pindar refers to this in his first Pythian ode (474 B.C.): "the kindly worth of Crœsus fades not; but in every land hate follows the name of *him who burned men in a brazen bull, the ruthless Phalaris.*"

This habit of slowly roasting objectionable persons in a brazen bull was the only definite trait which the Greeks of the classical age associated with Phalaris. And this is the single fact on which Lucian founds his amusing piece, in which envoys from Phalaris offer the bull to the temple of Delphi, and a Delphian casuist urges that it ought to be accepted. The bull may be seen, portrayed by the fancy of a modern artist, in the frontispiece to Charles Boyle's edition of the Letters. The head of the brazen animal is uplifted, as if it was bellowing; one of the tyrant's apparitors is holding up the lid of a large oblong aperture in the bull's left flank; two others are hustling in a wretched man, who has already disappeared, all but his legs. The two servants wear the peculiar expression of countenance which may be seen on the faces of persons engaged in packing; meanwhile another pair of slaves, with more animated features, are arranging the fagots under the bull, which are already beginning to blaze cheerfully, so that a gentle warmth must be felt on the inner surface of the brass, though it will probably be

some minutes yet before it begin to be uncomfortable. Phalaris is seated on his throne just behind the bull, in a sort of undress uniform, with a long round ruler for sceptre in his right hand; firmness and mildness are so blended in his aspect that it is impossible not to feel in the presence of a great and good man; on the left side of the throne, a Polonius is standing a little in the background, with a look of lively edification subdued by deference: and in the distance there is a view of hills and snug farmhouses, suggesting fair rents and fixity of tenure.

The rather hazy outlines of the old Greek tradition are filled up by Phalaris himself in the Letters, which abound with little bits of autobiography. He gives us to know that he was born—not at Agrigentum, as Lucian has it—but at a place called Astypalæa, seemingly a town in Crete. He got into trouble there at an early age, being suspected of aiming at a tyranny, and was banished, leaving his wife and son behind him; when he betook himself to Agrigentum, and there became a farmer of taxes: obtained the management of a contract for building a temple on the rocky height above the town; hired troops with the funds thus committed to him; and so made himself master of the place. Some of the letters are to his wife, his son, and a few of his particular friends, among whom is the poet Stesichorus. One or two epistles are addressed to distinguished strangers, begging them to come and see him in Sicily—as to Pythagoras, and Abaris the Hyperborean; and, what is very curious, the collection gives us the answer sent by Abaris, which refers not obscurely to the bull, and declines the invitation of the prince in language more forcible than polite. Then there are a few letters to various communities—the people of Messene, the people of Tauromenion, and others.

It may be well to give a short specimen or two. Not a few of the Letters, it should be premised, are pervaded by a strain of allusion to the bull. Phalaris was a person of almost morbid sensibility, and if there was one subject on which he was more alive to innuendo than another it was this of the bull, and the want of regard for the feelings of others which his use of it had been thought to imply. There are moments when he can no longer suffer in silence, but comes to the point, as in the following letter to the Athenians [Ep. 122=5 (Lennep)]:

"Your artist Perilaus, Athenians, came to me with some works of very satisfactory execution; on account of which we gladly received him, and requited him with worthy gifts, for the sake of his art, and more particularly for the sake of his native city. Not long since, however, he made a brazen bull of more than natural size, and brought it to Akragas. Now we were delighted to welcome an animal whose labours are associated with those of man; the effigy appeared a most proper gift to a prince—a noble object of art; for he had not yet disclosed to us the death which lurked within. But when he opened a door in the flank, and laid bare

> 'Murder fulfilled of perfect cruelty,
> A fate more dire than all imagined death,'

then, indeed, after praising him for his skill, we proceeded to punish him for his inhumanity. We resolved to make him the first illustration of his own device, since we had never met with a worse villain than its contriver. So we put him into the bull, and lit the fire about it, according to his own directions for the burning. Cruel was his science; stern the proof to which he brought it. We did not see the sufferer; we heard not his cries or lamenta-

tions; for the human shrieks that resounded within came forth to his listening punishers as the bellowings of a brazen throat.

"Now, Athenians, when I was informed that you resented the removal of your artist, and were incensed with me, I felt surprise; and for the present I am unable to credit the report. If you censure me on the ground that I did not torment him by a more cruel mode of death, I reply that no mode more cruel has yet occurred to me; if, on the other hand, you blame me for having punished him at all, then your city, which glories in its humanity, courts the charge of extreme barbarity. The bull was the work of one Athenian, or of all: but this will be decided by your disposition towards me.... If you consider the case dispassionately, you will perceive that I act involuntarily; and that, if Providence decrees that I must suffer, my lot will be unmerited. Though my royal power gives me free scope of action, I still recognize that measures of a harsh tendency are exceptional; and, though I cannot revoke the deeds of the past, I can confess their gravity. Would, however, that I had never been compelled to them by a hard necessity! In that case, no one else would have been named for his virtues where Phalaris was in company."

The following letter, addressed by Phalaris to a peevish critic, shows that consciousness of rectitude had gradually braced the too sensitive mind of the prince [Ep. 66=94 (Lennep)]:

"*To Telecleides.*

"For reasons best known to yourself, you have repeatedly observed in conversation with my friends that, after the death of Perilaus, the artist of the bull, I ought not to have despatched any other persons by the same mode

of torment; since I thus cancel my own merit. Possibly you had in view the result which has actually occurred—viz., that your remarks should be carried to me. Now, as to Perilaus, I do not value myself upon the compliments which I received for having punished him; praise was not my object in assuming that office. As to the other persons, I feel no uneasiness at the misrepresentations to which I am exposed for chastising them. Retribution operates in a sphere apart from good or evil report. Permit me, however, to observe that my reason for correcting the artist was precisely this—that other persons *were* to be despatched in the bull.... Well, I am now in possession of your views; it is unnecessary for you to trouble other listeners; do but cease to worry yourself and me."

The slight testiness which appears at the end only confirms Sir William Temple's remark, that here we have to do with a man of affairs, whose time was not to be at the mercy of every idle tattler. After Wotton had published the first edition of his "Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning" (1694), Bentley had happened to speak with him of the passage in Temple's Essay which we quoted above. Bentley observed that the Letters of Phalaris could be proved to be spurious, and that nothing composed by Æsop was extant: opinions which he had formed, and intimated, long before Temple wrote. Wotton then obtained a promise from Bentley that he would give his reasons for these views in a paper to be printed as an appendix to the second edition of the "Reflections." But meanwhile an incident occurred which gave a new turn to the matter.

Dr. Henry Aldrich, then Dean of Christ Church, had been accustomed to engage the most promising of the younger scholars in the task of editing classical authors,

and copies of such editions were usually presented by him to members of the House at the beginning of the year. Temple's essay had attracted attention to the Letters of Phalaris. In 1693 the preparation of a new edition was proposed by the Dean to "a young Gentleman of great hopes" (as Bentley calls him), the Honourable Charles Boyle, a brother of the Earl of Orrery, and grand-nephew of Robert Boyle, the founder of the Lectures. Charles Boyle was at this time only seventeen. Before coming to Oxford, he had been the private pupil of Dr. Gale, the Dean of York (formerly, for a brief space, Greek Professor at Cambridge), of whom he says: "the foundation of all the little knowledge I have in these matters was laid by him, which I gratefully own." Boyle's scholarship seems to have been quite up to the higher school standard of that day: he appears to have been bright, clever, and amiable, and was personally much liked at Christ Church. In preparing his Phalaris, he wished to consult a manuscript which was in the King's Library at St. James's. He accordingly wrote to his bookseller in London, Mr. Thomas Bennet, "at the Half-moon in St. Paul's Churchyard," requesting him to get the manuscript collated. This was apparently in September, 1693. Bentley had then nothing to do with the Library. The Royal Patent constituting him Keeper of His Majesty's Libraries bore date April 12, 1694: and, owing to delays of form, it was the beginning of May before he had actual custody of the Library at St. James's. Bennet had already spoken to Bentley (early in 1694, it seems) about the manuscript of Phalaris: and Bentley had replied that he would gladly "help Mr. Boyle to the book."

Meanwhile Bennet had received urgent applications from Boyle, and had laid the blame of the delay on Bentley.

As soon as the latter had assumed charge of the Library (May, 1694), he gave the manuscript to a person sent for it by Bennet. "I ordered him," says Bentley, "to tell the collator not to lose any time: for I was shortly to go out of town for two months." This was afterwards proved by a letter from Gibson, the person employed as collator. The manuscript remained in Gibson's hands "five or six days," according to Bentley: and this estimate can scarcely be excessive, for Boyle himself says merely "not *nine*." Bentley was to leave London for Worcester (to reside two months there) at five o'clock on a Monday morning towards the end of May. On the Saturday before, about noon, Bentley went to Bennet's shop, asked for the manuscript, and waited whilst a message was sent to Gibson. Word came back that Gibson had not finished the collation. Bennet then begged that the manuscript might be left with him till Sunday morning, and promised to make the collator sit up all night. Bentley declined to comply with this demand, but said that they might keep the manuscript till the evening of that day—Saturday. On Saturday evening it was restored to Bentley. Only forty-eight letters had then been collated.

As this affair was made a grave charge against Bentley, it is well to see just what it means. The business of the collator was to take a printed text of Phalaris, compare it with the manuscript, and note those readings in which the manuscript differed from it. This particular manuscript was, in Bentley's words, "as legible as print." "I had a mind," he says, "for the experiment's sake, to collate the first forty epistles, which are all that the collator has done. And I had finished them in an hour and eighteen minutes; though I made no very great haste. And yet I remarked and set down above fifty various lections, though the edi-

tor has taken notice of one only." This manuscript contains only 127 of the 148 letters. At Bentley's rate, the whole might have been done in about five hours. Suppose that Bentley worked thrice as fast as Gibson; the latter would have required fifteen hours. Grant, further, that Gibson had the manuscript for four days only, though Boyle's phrase, "less than nine," implies eight. He could still have completed his task by working less than four hours a day. So utterly groundless was the complaint that Bentley had not allowed sufficient time for the use of the manuscript.

That, however, was the defence which Bennet made to his employer. Clearly he had no liking for the new Librarian who had begun by exacting the dues of the Royal Library. And he supported it by representing Bentley as unfriendly to Boyle's work. "The bookseller once asked me privately," says Bentley, "that I would do him the favour to tell my opinion, if the new edition of Phalaris, then in the press, would be a vendible book? for he had a concern in the impression, and hoped it would sell well; such a great character being given of it in [Temple's] Essays as made it mightily inquired after. I told him, He would be safe enough, since he was concerned for nothing but the sale of the book: for the great names of those that recommended it would get it many buyers. But however, under the rose, the book was a spurious piece, and deserved not to be spread in the world by another impression." Dr. William King, a member of Christ Church, and a "wit," chanced to be in Bennet's shop one day, and overheard some remark of Bentley's which he considered rude towards Boyle. "After he [Bentley] was gone," writes the frank Dr. King, "I told Mr. Bennet that he ought to send Mr. Boyle word of it." Boyle's edition

of Phalaris appeared in January, 1695, with a graceful dedication to the Dean of Christ Church. The Latin preface concludes thus:

"I have collated the Letters themselves with two Bodleian manuscripts from the Cantuar and Selden collection; I have also procured a collation, as far as Letter XL., of a manuscript in the Royal Library; the Librarian, with that courtesy which distinguishes him [*pro singulari sua humanitate*], refused me the further use of it. I have not recorded every variation of the MSS. from the printed texts; to do so would have been tedious and useless; but, wherever I have departed from the common reading, my authority will be found in the notes. This little book is indebted to the printer for more than usual elegance; it is hoped that the author's labour may bring it an equal measure of acceptance."

Pro singulari sua humanitate: with that courtesy which distinguishes him; or, as Bentley renders it, with grim literalness, "out of his singular humanity!" This, says Bentley, "was meant as a lash for me, who had the honour then and since to serve his Majesty in that office" (of Librarian); and, in fact, the nature of Bentley's "humanity" forthwith became a question of the day.

The tone of Boyle's public reference to Bentley was wholly unjustifiable. Bentley had returned from Worcester to London some months before Boyle's book was ready, but no application had been made to him for a further use of the manuscript, though a few hours would have finished the collation. Bentley, after his return to London, spent a fortnight at Oxford, "conversing," he says, "in the very college where the editors resided; not the least whisper there of the manuscript." It was on January 26—when the book had been out more than three

weeks—that Bentley chanced to see it for the first time, "in the hands of a person of honour to whom it had been presented; and the rest of the impression was not yet published. This encouraged me to write the very same evening to Mr. Boyle at Oxford, and to give him a true information of the whole matter; expecting that, upon the receipt of my letter, he would put a stop to the publication of his book, till he had altered that passage, and printed the page anew; which he might have done in one day, and at the charge of five shillings. I did not expressly desire him to take out that passage, and reprint the whole leaf; that I thought was too low a submission. But I said enough to make any person of common justice and ingenuity [ingenuousness] have owned me thanks for preventing him from doing a very ill action." "After a delay of two posts," Boyle replied in terms of which Bentley gives the substance thus: "that what I had said in my own behalf might be true; but that Mr. Bennet had represented the thing quite otherwise. If he had had my account before, he should have considered of it: and [but?] now that the book was made public, he would not interpose, but that I might do myself right in what method I pleased." On receiving Bentley's explanation, Boyle was clearly bound, if not to withdraw the offensive passage, at least to stop its circulation until he had inquired further. And he knew this, as his own words show. This is his account of his reply to Bentley: "That Mr. Bennet, whom I employed to wait on him in my name, gave me such an account of his reception, that I had reason to apprehend myself affronted: and since I could make no other excuse to my reader, for not collating the King's MS., but because 'twas denyed me, I thought I cou'd do no less than express some resentment of that denial. That I shou'd be very

much concern'd if Mr. Bennet had dealt so ill with me as to mislead me in his accounts; *and if that appear'd, shou'd be ready to take some opportunity of begging his* [Bentley's] *pardon: and, as I remember, I express'd myself so, that the Dr might understand I meant to give him satisfaction as publickly as I had injur'd him. Here the matter rested, and I thought that Dr Bentley was satisfied.*"

That is to say, Boyle had offered a public affront to Bentley, without inquiring whether Bennet's story was true; Bentley explained that it was untrue; and Boyle still refused to make any amend, even provisionally. Bentley was advised by some of his friends to refute the aspersion: which, indeed, was not merely a charge of rudeness, but also of failure in his duty as Librarian. He remained silent. "Out of a natural aversion to all quarrels and broils, and out of regard to the editor himself, I resolved to take no notice of it, but to let the matter drop."

But in 1697 Wotton was preparing a second edition of the "Reflections," and claimed Bentley's old promise to write something on Æsop and Phalaris. Then, in a great hurry, Bentley wrote an essay on the "Epistles of Phalaris, Themistocles, Socrates, Euripides, and others; and the Fables of Æsop." This essay was printed, with a separate title-page, at the end of the new edition of the "Reflections" (1697). What was he to say about Boyle? "Upon such an occasion," he remarks, "I was plainly obliged to speak of that calumny: for my silence would have been interpreted as good as a confession: especially considering with what industrious malice the story had been spread all over England." In this he was possibly right; it is not easy to say now. But his mode of self-vindication was certainly not judicious. He ought to have confined himself to a statement of the facts concerning the loan of

the manuscript. After doing this, however, he enters upon a hostile review of Boyle's book. Throughout it he speaks in the plural of "our editors." He may have had reason to know that Boyle had been assisted; but such a use of the knowledge was unwarrantable.

Boyle's edition was the slight performance of a very young man, and apart from the sentence in the preface, might fairly be regarded as privileged. It contains a short Latin life of Phalaris, based on ancient notices and on the Letters themselves; the Greek text, with a Latin version; and, at the end, some notes. These notes deserve mention only because Bentley was afterwards accused of having "pillaged" them. There was a singular hardihood in this charge. Boyle's notes on the hundred and forty-eight Letters occupy just twelve small pages. The greater part of them are simply brief paraphrases intended to bring out the sense of the text. Three Latin translations of Phalaris then existed; one, not printed, but easily accessible in manuscript, by Francesco Accolti of Arezzo (Aretino); a second, printed by Thomas Kirchmeier, who Hellenized his surname into Naogeorgus (Basel, 1558); and a third, ascribed to Cujas, which Boyle knew as re-issued at Ingolstadt in 1614 for the use of the Jesuit schools. Boyle's version occasionally coincides with phrases of Aretino or the Jesuit text; this, however, may well be accident. It is manifest, however, that his translation was based on that of Naogeorgus, who is sometimes less elegant, but not seldom more accurate.

The story of the controversy has usually been told as if Boyle defended the genuineness of the Letters, while Bentley impugned it. That is certainly the impression which any one would derive from Bentley's Dissertation, with its banter of "our editors and their Sicilian prince." Proba-

bly it will be new to most persons that Boyle had never asserted the genuineness of the Letters. On the contrary, he had expressly stated some reasons for believing that they were not genuine.

I translate the following from Boyle's Latin preface:

"The reader of these Letters will find less profit in inquiring who wrote them than pleasure in enjoying the perusal. As to the authorship, the conflicting opinions of learned men must be consulted—perhaps in vain; as to the worth of the book, the reader can judge best for himself. Lest I disappoint curiosity, however—though the controversy does not deserve keen zeal on either part—I will briefly explain what seems to me probable on both sides of the question."

Here he enumerates: (1) some of those who think the Letters genuine—including Sir W. Temple, whose encomium on Phalaris he freely Latinizes: (2) those who believe the Letters to be the work of Lucian. Here Boyle gives his reasons—excellent as far as they go—for holding that Lucian was *not* the author. He then resumes:

"These are my reasons for not ascribing the Letters to Lucian; there are other reasons which make me doubt whether Phalaris can claim the Letters as his own. It was scarcely possible that Letters written by so distinguished a man, and in their own kind perfect, should have remained completely hidden for more than a thousand years: and, as Sicilian writers always preferred the Dorian dialect, the tyrant of the Agrigentines (who were Dorians) ought to have used no other. In the style there is nothing unworthy of a king, except that he is too fond of antithesis, and sometimes rather frigid. I have also noticed that sometimes (though that may be accidental) the Letters bear names which look as if they had been invented to suit the contents. As to history, time has robbed us of all certain knowledge regarding the state of Sicily and its commonwealth, in that age; and the recipients of the letters are mostly obscure, except Stesichorus, Pythagoras, and Abaris; whose age agrees with that of Phalaris—thus affording no hold for doubt on that ground. If, how-

ever, Diodorus Siculus is right in saying that Tauromenium, whose citizens our author addresses, was built and so called after the destruction of Naxos by the younger Dionysius—then the claim of Phalaris is destroyed, and the whole fabric of conjectural ascription falls to the ground. This is the sum of what I had to say on my author—set forth, indeed, somewhat hastily; but, if more learned men have anything to urge against it, I am ready to hear it."

Boyle wrote this, let it be remembered, before Bentley had published anything on the subject. Boyle was strictly justified in saying afterwards, "I never profess'd myself a patron of Phalaris;" "I was not in the least concern'd to vindicate the Letters." He defines his own position with exactness in another place: "Phalaris was always a favourite book with me: from the moment I knew it, I wish'd it might prove an original: I had now and then, indeed, some suspicions that 'twas not genuine; but I lov'd him so much more than I suspected him, that I wou'd not suffer myself to dwell long upon 'em. To be sincere, the opinion, or mistake, if you will, was so pleasing that I was somewhat afraid of being undeceiv'd." It was Sir William Temple, not Boyle, who was committed to the view that the Letters were genuine.

We shall speak of Bentley's Dissertation in its second and mature form. The first rough draft, in Wotton's book, is a rapid argument, with just enough illustration to make each topic clear. It had been very hastily written. That Boyle and his friends should have been angry, can surprise no one. Bentley, in rebutting a calumny, had become a rough assailant. A reply came out in January, 1696. It was entitled, "Dr. Bentley's Dissertations on the Epistles of Phalaris and the Fables of Æsop, examin'd by the Honourable Charles Boyle, Esq." The motto was taken from Roscommon's "Essay of Translated Verse:"

"Remember Milo's end;
Wedg'd in that Timber, which he strove to rend."

The piece is clever and effective. "Soon after Dr. Bentley's Dissertation came out," Boyle says in the preface, "I was call'd away into Ireland, to attend the Parliament there. The publick business, and my own private affairs, detain'd me a great while in that kingdom; else the world should have had a much earlier account of him and his performance." Boyle explains that he had edited the Letters "rather as one that wish'd well to learning than profess'd it." His motive for replying to Bentley's attack is "the publick affront" of being charged with setting his name to a book which was not his own. No one had helped him in it—except one friend who had been his adviser "upon any difficulty," and had also consulted "some books" for him "in the Oxford Libraries." As to the Letters, he had neither asserted nor denied their genuineness. He is sorry to have been the occasion of bringing such a storm on the head of Sir William Temple. He regrets, too, that Bentley should have extended his aspersions to Christ Church. Then comes an onslaught on Bentley's essay and a defence of Boyle's book. "A Short Account of Dr. Bentley by way of Index" was appended to the second edition. This is an index to the preceding 266 pages, under such heads as these: "Dr. Bentley's Civil Usage of Mr. Boyle; His Singular Humanity to Mr. Boyle; His Elegant Similes; His Clean and Gentile Metaphors; His Old Sayings and Proverbs; His Collection of Asinine Proverbs; His Extraordinary Talent at Drollery; His Dogmatical Air; His Ingenuity in transcribing and plundering Notes and Prefaces of Mr. Boyle [here follows a list of other victims]. His Modesty and Decency in contradicting Great Men [here fol-

lows a list of the persons contradicted, ending with *Everybody*]."

This, we know, was a joint performance. Francis Atterbury, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, was then thirty-six: George Smalridge was a year younger. Both were already distinguished at Oxford. Atterbury, in a letter to Boyle, says with reference to this piece: "in writing more than half of the book, in reviewing a good part of the rest, in transcribing the whole and attending the press half a year of my life has passed away." Smalridge is supposed to have contributed a playful proof that Bentley did not write his own essay. This is a parody of Bentley's arguments about Phalaris, partly woven with his own words and phrases. This sham Bentley—urges the critic—"is a perfect Dorian in his language, in his thoughts, and in his breeding." It is vain to plead that "he was born in some Village remote from Town, and bred among the Peasantry while young." The real Bentley had been "a Member of one University, and a Sojourner in the other; a Chaplain in Ordinary to the King, and a Tutor in extraordinary to a Young Gentleman:" such a man must surely have written *Attic;* he must "have quitted his Old Country Dialect for that of a Londoner, a Gentleman, and a Scholar." Then the sham Bentley is "a Fierce and Angry Writer; and One, who when he thinks he has an advantage over another Man, gives him no Quarter." But the real Bentley says in his Letter to Dr. Mill, "it is not in my nature to trample upon the Prostrate." The real Bentley was "much vers'd in the Learned Languages." This pseudo-Bentley shows "that he was not only a perfect Stranger to the best Classic Authors, but that he wanted that Light which any Ordinary Dictionary would have afforded him." The pages on Æsop may have been

chiefly due to Anthony Alsop, a young Student of Christ Church, who edited the Fables in that year (1698). The "very deserving gentleman" to whom Boyle refers as his assistant appears to have been John Freind, whose brother Robert (both were Students of Christ Church) is also believed to have helped. Some of the insults to Bentley are very gross. Thus it is hinted, twice over, that his further compliance in the matter of the manuscript might have been purchased by a fee. This is the only thing in the piece which Bentley noticed with a word of serious reproof.

The book gives us some curious glimpses of the way in which critical studies were then viewed by Persons of Honour. "Begging the Dr's pardon," says Boyle, "I take *Index-hunting* after Words and Phrases to be, next after *Anagrams* and *Acrosticks*, the lowest Diversion a Man can betake himself to." Boyle is apprehensive lest "worthy Men, who know so well how to employ their hours, should be diverted from the pursuit of Useful Knowledge into such trivial Enquiries as these:" and he shrinks from being suspected of having "thrown away any considerable part of his life on so trifling a subject." He need not have felt much uneasiness.

However small Boyle's share in this book may have been, it is right to observe that there is an almost ludicrous exaggeration in the popular way of telling the story, as if all Christ Church, or all Oxford, had been in a league to annihilate Bentley. The joint book was written by a group of clever friends who represented only themselves. Rymer, indeed, says, "Dr. Aldrich, no doubt, was at the head of them, and smoaked and punned plentifully on this occasion." But this was a mistake. The "Short Review" published anonymously in 1701 (the author was

Atterbury) says expressly: "That an answer was preparing, he [the Dean of Christ Church] knew nothing of till 'twas publick talk, and he never saw a line of the *Examination* but in Print."

In the preface to Anthony Alsop's Æsop—another of the Christ Church editions, which came out, before Boyle's book, early in 1698—our hero is mentioned as "a certain Bentley, diligent enough in turning over lexicons;" and his behaviour about the manuscript is indicated by a Latin version of "The Dog in the Manger." The wearied ox, coming home to dinner, is driven from his hay by the snarling usurper, and remonstrates warmly; when the dog replies, "You call me currish; if foreigners are any judges, there is not a hound alive that approaches me in humanity." To whom the ox: "Is this your *singular humanity*, to refuse me the food that you will not and cannot enjoy yourself?"

At last "Boyle against Bentley" came out (1698). Its success was enormous. A second edition was called for in a few months. A third edition followed in the next year. Forty-six years later, when both the combatants were dead, it was still thought worth while to publish a fourth edition.

Temple lost no time in pronouncing. In March, just after the book appeared, he writes: "The compass and application of so much learning, the strength and pertinence of his (Boyle's) arguments, the candour of his relations, in return to such foul-mouthed raillery, the pleasant turns of wit, and the easiness of style, are in my opinion as extraordinary as the contrary of these all appear to be in what the Doctor and his friend [Wotton] have written." Hard as this is on Bentley, it is harder still on poor Wotton, who had been elaborately civil to Temple.

Garth published his *Dispensary* in 1699, with that luckless couplet—meant, says Noble, "to please his brother wits at Button's:"

> "So diamonds take a lustre from their foil,
> And to a Bentley 'tis we owe a Boyle."

John Milner, formerly Vicar of Leeds, had, as a non-juror, lost his preferments at the Revolution, and was then living at St. John's College, Cambridge. In his "View of the Dissertation" (1698) he proposes "to manifest the incertitude of heathen chronology," and takes part against Bentley. According to Eustace Budgell, a caricature was published at Cambridge, in which Phalaris was consigning Bentley to the bull, while the Doctor exclaimed, "I would rather be roasted than boyled." Rymer, in his "Essay on Critical and Curious Learning" (1698), blames both parties. As to the question at issue, he argues that "curious" learning is all very well in its way, but should not be carried too far. On Boyle's critique Rymer makes a shrewd remark: "There is such a profusion of wit all along, and such variety of points and raillery, that every man seems to have thrown in a repartee or so in his turn." Mr. Cole (of Magdalen College, Oxford) compared it to "a Cheddar cheese, made of all the milk of the parish."

In short, "society" had declared against Bentley, and the men of letters almost unanimously agreed with it. While other acquaintances were turning their backs, Evelyn stood loyal. That was the state of things in 1698. Bentley remained calm. A friend who met him one day urged him not to lose heart. "Indeed," he replied, "I am in no pain about the matter; for it is a maxim with me that no man was ever written out of reputation but by himself." Meanwhile he was preparing a reply.

CHAPTER V.

BENTLEY'S DISSERTATION.

We have seen that Bentley's essay in Wotton's book had been a hasty production. "I drew up that dissertation," he says, "in the spare hours of a few weeks; and while the Printer was employed about one leaf, the other was amaking." He now set to work to revise and enlarge it. He began his task about March, 1698—soon after Boyle's pamphlet appeared—but was interrupted in it by the two months of his residence at Worcester, from the end of May to the end of July. It was finished toward the close of 1698. The time employed upon it had thus been about seven and a half months, not free from other and urgent duties. It was published early in 1699. Let us clearly apprehend the point at issue. Boyle did not assert that the Letters of Phalaris were genuine; but he denied that Bentley had yet proved them to be spurious.

After a detailed refutation of the personal charges against him, Bentley comes to the Letters of Phalaris. First he takes the flagrant anachronisms. The Letters mention towns which, at the supposed date, were not built, or bore other names. Phalaris presents his physician with the ware of a potter named Thericles—much as if Oliver Cromwell were found dispensing the masterpieces

of Wedgwood. Phalaris quotes books which had not been written; nay, he is familiar with forms of literature which had not been created. Though a Dorian, he writes to his familiar friends in Attic, and in a species of false Attic which did not exist for five centuries after he was dead. Farmer of the taxes though he had been, he has no idea of values in the ordinary currency of his own country. Thus he complains that the hostile community of Catana had made a successful raid on his principality, and had robbed him of no less a sum than seven talents. Again, he mentions with some complacency that he has bestowed the munificent dower of five talents on a lady of distinction. According to the Sicilian standard, the loss of the prince would have amounted to twelve shillings and seven pence, while the noble bride would have received nine shillings. The occasions of the letters, too, are often singular. A Syracusan sends his brother to Akragas, a distance of a hundred miles, with a request that Phalaris would send a messenger to Stesichorus (another hundred miles or so), and beg that poet to write a copy of verses on the Syracusan's deceased wife. "This," says Bentley, "is a scene of putid and senseless formality." Then Phalaris (who brags in one of the letters that Pythagoras had stayed five months with him) says to Stesichorus, "*pray* do not mention me in your poems." "This," says Bentley, "was a sly fetch of our sophist, to prevent so shrewd an objection from Stesichorus's silence as to any friendship at all with him." But supposing Phalaris had really been so modest—Bentley adds—still, Stesichorus was a man of the world. The poet would have known "that those sort of requests are but a modest simulation, and a disobedience would have been easily pardoned." Again, these Letters are not mentioned by any writer before the

fifth century of our era, and it is clear that the ancients did not know them. Thus, in the Letters, Phalaris displays the greatest solicitude for the education of his son Paurolas, and writes to the young man in terms which would do credit to the best of fathers. But in Aristotle's time there was a tradition which placed the parental conduct of Phalaris in another light. It alleged, in fact, that, while this boy was still of a tender age, the prince had caused him to be served up at table: but how, asks Bentley—supposing the Letters to be genuine—"could he eat his son while he was an infant?" It is true, the works of some writers in the early Christian centuries (Phædrus, Paterculus, Lactantius) are not mentioned till long after their death. But the interval was one during which the Western world was lapsing into barbarism. The supposed epoch of Phalaris was followed by "the greatest and longest reign of learning that the world has yet seen:" and yet his Letters remain hidden for a thousand years. "Take them in the whole bulk, they are a fardle of commonplaces, without any life or spirit from action and circumstance. Do but cast your eye upon Cicero's letters, or any statesman's, as Phalaris was; what lively characters of men there! what descriptions of place! what notifications of time! what particularity of circumstances! what multiplicity of designs and events! When you return to these again, you feel, by the emptiness and deadness of them, that you converse with some dreaming pedant with his elbow on his desk; not with an active, ambitious tyrant, with his hand on his sword, commanding a million of subjects."

Bentley's incidental discussions of several topics are so many concise monographs, each complete in itself, each exhaustive within its own limits, and each, at the same

time, filling its due place in the economy of the whole. Such are the essays on the age of Pythagoras, on the beginnings of Greek Tragedy, on anapæstic verse, on the coinage of Sicily. In the last-named subject, it might have appeared almost impossible that a writer of Bentley's time should have made any near approximation to correctness. He had not such material aids as are afforded by the Sicilian coins which we now possess—without which the statements of ancient writers would appear involved in hopeless contradiction. I am glad, therefore, to quote an estimate of Bentley's work in this department by a master of numismatic science. Mr. Barclay Head writes: "Speaking generally, Bentley's results are surprisingly accurate. I think I may safely say that putting aside what was to have been done within the last fifty years, Bentley's essay stands alone. Even Eckhel, in his 'Doctrina numorum' (1790), has nothing to compare with it." Again, Bentley's range and grasp of knowledge are strikingly seen in critical remarks of general bearing which are drawn from him by the course of the discussion. Thus at the outset he gives in a few words a broad view of the origin and growth of literary forgery in the ancient world. In the last two centuries before Christ, when there was a keen rivalry between the libraries of Pergamus and Alexandria, the copiers of manuscripts began the practice of inscribing them with the names of great writers, in order that they might fetch higher prices. Thus far, the motive of falsification was simply mercenary. But presently a different cause began to swell the number of spurious works. It was a favourite exercise of rhetoric, in the early period of the Empire, to compose speeches or letters in the name and character of some famous person. At first such exercises would, of course, make no pretence of being anything

more. But, as the art was developed, "some of the Greek Sophists had the success and satisfaction to see their essays in that kind pass with some readers for the genuine works of those they endeavoured to express. This, no doubt, was great content and joy to them; being as full a testimony of their skill in imitation, as the birds gave to the painter when they pecked at his grapes." Some of them, indeed, candidly confessed the trick. "But most of them took the other way, and, concealing their own names, put off their copies for originals; preferring that silent pride and fraudulent pleasure, though it was to die with them, before an honest commendation from posterity for being good imitators." And hence such Letters as those of Phalaris.

Dr. Aldrich had lately dedicated his Logic to Charles Boyle. Bentley makes a characteristic use of this circumstance. "If his new System of Logic teaches him such arguments," says Bentley, "I'll be content with the old ones." The whole Dissertation, in fact, is a remorseless syllogism. But Bentley is more than a sound reasoner. He shows in a high degree the faculties which go to make debating power. He is frequently successful in the useful art of turning the tables. Alluding to his opponent's mock proof that "Dr. Bentley could not be the author of the Dissertation," he remarks that Boyle's Examination is open to a like doubt in good earnest, if we are to argue "from the variety of styles in it, from its contradictions to his edition of Phalaris, from its contradictions to itself, from its contradictions to Mr. B.'s character and to his title of honourable." Boyle had said of Bentley, "the man that writ this must have been fast asleep, for else he could never have talked so wildly." Bentley replies, "I hear a greater paradox talked of

abroad; that not the 'wild' only, but the best, part of the Examiner's book may possibly have been written while he was fast asleep."

He is often neat, too, in exploding logical fallacies. Boyle argued that, as Diodorus gives two different dates for the founding of Tauromenium, neither can be trusted. Bentley rejoins: "One man told me in company that the Examiner was twenty-four years old; and another said, twenty-five. Now, these two stories contradict one another, and neither can be depended on; we are at liberty, therefore, to believe him a person of about fifty years of age." Boyle had taken refuge in a desperate suggestion that people might have been called "Tauromenites" from a river Tauromenius, before there was a city Tauromenium. "Now," says Bentley, "if the Tauromenites were a sort of fish, this argument drawn from the river would be of great force." Boyle had argued that a Greek phrase was not poetical because each of the two words forming it was common. Bentley quotes from Lucretius:

"Luna dies, et nox, et noctis signa severa,"

Is not every word common? And is the total effect prosaic? Bentley's retort is a mere quibble, turning on the ambiguity of "common" as meaning either "vulgar" or "simple"—but illustrates his readiness. Once—as if in contempt for his adversary's understanding—he has indulged in a notable sophism. Boyle had argued that the *name* "tragedy" cannot have existed before the *thing*. Bentley rejoins: "'tis a proposition false in itself *that things themselves must be, before the names by which they are called*. For we have many new tunes in music made every day, which never existed before; yet several of them are called by *names* that were formerly in use: and

perhaps the tune of Chevy Chase, though it be of famous antiquity, is a little younger than the name of the chase itself. And I humbly conceive that Mr. Hobbes's book, which he called the *Leviathan*, is not quite as ancient as its name is in Hebrew." But the "name" of which Boyle spoke was descriptive, not merely appellative. Bentley's reasoning would have been relevant only if Boyle had argued that, since a tragedy is called the "Agamemnon," Tragedy must have existed before Agamemnon lived.

As to the English style of the Dissertation, the Boyle party had expressed their opinion pretty freely when the first draft of it had appeared in Wotton's book. They complained that, when Bentley "had occasion to express himself in Terms of Archness and Waggery," he descended to "low and mean Ways of Speech." "The familiar expressions of *taking one tripping — coming off with a whole skin, minding his hits — a friend at a pinch — going to blows — setting horses together*—and *going to pot;* with others borrow'd from the Sports and Employments of the Country; shew our Author to have been accustom'd to another sort of Exercise than that of the Schools." Alluding to the painful fate which was said to have overtaken the mother of Phalaris, Bentley particularly shocked his critics by the phrase, "Roasting the old Woman;" and, in a similar strain of rustic levity, he had described the parent of Euripides as "Mother Clito the Herbwoman." Dr. King, of Christ Church (who, it will be remembered, had meddled in the manuscript affair), had written an account of a journey to London; wherein he relates that, on his asking concerning the ales at a certain inn, the host answered "that he had a thousand such sort of liquors, as humtie dumtie, three-threads, four-threads, old Pharoah [*sic*], knockdown, hugmetee," &c. Playfully re-

ferring to this passage, Bentley says (speaking of a wild assertion), "A man must be dosed with Humty-dumty that could talk so inconsistently;" and again, speaking of Dr. King's statements, "If he comes with more testimonies of his Bookseller or his Humty-dumty acquaintance, I shall take those for no answer." Worst of all, this familiar style was used towards Phalaris himself and his defenders. Speaking of the Greek rhetoricians, Bentley announces that his design is "to pull off the disguise from those little Pedants that have so long stalkt about in the Apparel of Heroes." The work of Boyle and his assistants is thus characterised: "Here are your Work-men to mend an author; as bungling Tinkers do old kettles; there was but one hole in the text before they meddled with it, but they leave it with two."

Not a soothing style this, nor one to be recommended for imitation. But what vigour there is in some of the phrases that Bentley strikes out at a red heat! They ought to have made inquiries "before they ventur'd to Print—*which is a sword in the hand of a Child.*" "He gives us some shining metaphors, and a polished period or two; but, for the matter of it, it is *some common and obvious thought dressed and curled in the beauish way.*" Speaking of work which Bishop Pearson had left unfinished: "though it has not passed the last hand of the author, yet it's every way worthy of him; and the *very dust of his writings is gold.*" And here—as Bentley was charged in this controversy with such boundless arrogance, and such "indecency in contradicting great men"—let us note his tone in the Dissertation towards eminent men then living or lately dead. Nothing could be more becoming, more worthy of his own genius, than the warm, often glowing, terms in which he speaks of such men as Selden,

Pearson, Lloyd, Stillingfleet, Spanheim—in a word, of almost all the distinguished scholars whom he has occasion to name. Dodwell, who was ranged against him, is treated with scrupulous courtesy and fairness. Joshua Barnes, whose own conduct to Bentley had been remarkably bad, could scarcely be described more indulgently than in these words—"one of a singular industry and a most diffuse reading." Those were precisely the two things which could truly be said in praise of Barnes, and it would not have been easy to find a third.

Hallam characterises the style of the Dissertation as "rapid, concise, amusing, and superior to Boyle in that which he had chiefly to boast, a sarcastic wit." It may be questioned how far "wit," in its special modern sense, was a distinguishing trait on either side of this controversy. The chief weapons of the Boyle alliance were rather derision and invective. Bentley's sarcasm is always powerful and often keen; but the finer quality of wit, though seen in some touches, can hardly be said to pervade the Dissertation. As to the humour, that is unquestionable. There is so far an unconscious element in it, that its effect on the reader is partly due to Bentley's tremendous and unflagging earnestness in heaping up one absurdity upon another. This cumulative humour belongs to the essay as a whole; as Bentley marches on triumphantly from one exposure to another, our sense of the ludicrous is constantly rising. But it can be seen on a smaller scale too. For instance, one of Boyle's grievances was that Bentley had indirectly called him an ass. In Bentley's words: "By the help, he says, of a Greek proverb, I call him a downright ass. After I had censured a passage of Mr. Boyle's translation that has no affinity with the original, *This puts me in mind*, said I, *of the old Greek proverb, that Leucon carries one*

thing, and his Ass quite another. Where the Ass is manifestly spoken of the Sophist [the real author of the Letters], whom I had before represented as *an Ass under a Lion's skin.* And if Mr. B. has such a dearness for his Phalaris that he'll change places with him there, how can I help it? I can only protest that I put him into Leucon's place; and if he will needs compliment himself out of it, '*I must leave the two friends to the pleasure of their mutual civilities.*'" [Boyle's own words about Bentley and Wotton.] But this was not all: Boyle had accused Bentley of comparing him to *Lucian's* ass. Now this, says Bentley, "were it true, would be no coarse compliment, but a very obliging one. For Lucian's Ass was a very intelligent and ingenious Ass, and had more sense than any of his Riders; he was no other than Lucian himself in the shape of an ass, and had a better talent at kicking and bantering than ever the Examiner will have, though it seems to be his chief one." "But is this Mr. B.'s way of interpreting similitudes? . . . If I liken an ill critic to a bungling Tinker, that makes two holes while he mends one; must I be charged with calling him Tinker? At this rate Homer will call his heroes Wolves, Boars, Dogs, and Bulls. And when Horace has this comparison about himself,

'Demitto auriculas, ut iniquae mentis asellus,'

Mr. B. may tell him that he calls himself downright ass. But he must be put in mind of the English proverb, that similitudes, even when they are taken from asses, do not walk upon all four." Swift—alluding to the transference of the Letters from Phalaris to their real source—called Bentley that "great rectifier of saddles." Bentley might have replied that he could rectify panniers too.

It would be a mistake to regard Bentley's Dissertation as if its distinctive merit had consisted in demonstrating the Letters of Phalaris to be spurious. That was by no means Bentley's own view. The spuriousness of these Letters, he felt from the first, was patent. He had given (in Wotton's book) a few of the most striking proofs of this: and he had been attacked. Now he was showing, in self-defence, that his proofs not only held good, but had deep and solid foundations. Others before him had suspected that the letters were forgeries, and he would have scorned to take the smallest credit for seeing what was so plain. He was the first to give sufficient reasons for his belief; but he did not care, and did not pretend, to give all the reasons that might be adduced. Indeed, any careful reader of the Letters can remark several proofs of spuriousness on which Bentley has not touched. For instance, it could be shown that the fictitious proper names are post-classical; that the forger was acquainted with Thucydides; and that he had read the *Theætetus* of Plato. But Bentley had done more than enough for his purpose. The glory of his treatise was not that it established his conclusion, but that it disclosed that broad and massive structure of learning upon which his conclusion rested. "The only book that I have writ upon my own account," he says, "is this present answer to Mr. B.'s objections; and I assure him I set no great price upon 't; the errors that it refutes are so many, so gross and palpable, that I shall never be very proud of the victory." At the same time, he justly refutes the assertion of his adversaries that the point at issue was of no moment. Bentley replies: "That the single point whether Phalaris be genuine or no is of no small importance to learning, the very learned Mr. Dodwell is a sufficient evidence; who, espous-

ing Phalaris for a true author, has endeavoured by that means to make a great innovation in the ancient chronology. To undervalue this dispute about Phalaris because it does not suit to one's own studies, is to quarrel with a circle because it is not a square."

A curious fatality attended on Bentley's adversaries in this controversy. While they dealt thrusts at points where he was invulnerable, they missed all the chinks in his armour except a statement limiting too narrowly the use of two Greek verbs, and his identification of "Alba Graeca" with Buda instead of Belgrade. Small and few, indeed, these chinks were. It would have been a petty, but fair, triumph for his opponents, if they had perceived that, in correcting a passage of Aristophanes, he had left a false quantity. They might have shown that a passage in Diodorus had led him into an error regarding Attic chronology during the reign of the Thirty Tyrants. They might have exulted in the fact that an emendation which he proposed in Isæus rested on a confusion between two different classes of choruses; that he had certainly misconstrued a passage in the life of Pythagoras by Iamblichus; that the "Minos," on which he relies as Plato's work, was spurious; that, in one of the Letters of Phalaris, he had defended a false reading by false grammar. They could have shown that Bentley was demonstrably wrong in asserting that no writings, bearing the name of Æsop, were extant in the time of Aristophanes; also in stating that the Fable of "The Two Boys" had not come down to the modern world: it was, in fact, very near them—safe in a manuscript at the Bodleian Library. Even the discussion on Zaleucus escaped: its weak points were first brought out by later critics — Warburton, Salter, Gibbon. Had such blemishes been ten times

more numerous, they would not have affected the worth of the book; but, such as they were, they were just of the kind which small detractors delight to magnify. In one place Bentley accuses Boyle of having adopted a wrong reading in one of the Letters, and thereby made nonsense of the passage. Now, Boyle's reading, though not the best, happens to be capable of yielding the very sense which Bentley required. Yet even this Boyle and his friends did not discover.

How was the Dissertation received? According to the popular account, no sooner had Bentley blown his mighty blast, than the walls of the hostile fortress fell flat. The victory was immediate, the applause universal, the foe's ruin overwhelming. Tyrwhitt, in his *Babrius*—published long after Bentley's death—is seeking to explain why Bentley never revised the remarks on Æsop, which he had published in Wotton's book. "Content with having prostrated his adversaries with the second Dissertation on Phalaris, as by a thunder-bolt, he withdrew in scorn from the uneven fight."

Let us see what the evidence is. Just as the great Dissertation appeared, Boyle's friends published "A short Account of Dr. Bentley's Humanity and Justice." It is conceived in a rancorous spirit; Bentley is accused of having plundered, in his Fragments of Callimachus, some papers which Thomas Stanley, the editor of Æschylus, left unpublished at his death; and Bentley's conduct to Boyle about the manuscript is set forth as related by the bookseller, Mr. Bennet. Now, in John Locke's correspondence, I find a letter to him from Thomas Burnet, formerly a Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, and then Master of Charterhouse, author of a fantastic book on the geological history of the earth (*Telluris Theoria Sacra*). The date

is March 19, 1699. Bentley had read part of his preface to Burnet before it was published. Burnet had now read the whole, and a great part of the Dissertation itself; also the newly published "Short Account." He is now disposed to believe Bennet's version. "I do profess, upon second thoughts . . . that his story seemeth the more likely, if not the most true, of the two." As to the Letters of Phalaris, he is aware that some great scholars are with Bentley. "But I doubt not," he adds, "that a greater number will be of another sentiment, who would not be thought to be of the unlearned tribe." That, we may be sure, was what many people were saying in London. A defence of Bentley against the "Short Account," which came out at this time, has been ascribed to a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford — Solomon Whately, the first translator of Phalaris into English.

The Boyle party had addressed themselves to the wits and the town. Bentley's work had plenty of qualities which could be appreciated in that quarter; but its peculiar strength lay in things of which few persons could judge. These few were at once convinced by it; and their authority helped to convince the inner circles of students. But the Boyle party still had on their side all those who, regarding the contest as essentially an affair of style, preferred Boyle's style to Bentley's. This number would include the rank and file of fashion and its dependents—the persons who wrote dedications, and the patrons in whose antechambers they waited. Most of them would be genuinely unconscious how good Bentley's answer was, and their prepossessions would set strongly the other way. So, while Bentley had persuaded the scholars, it would still be the tone of a large and influential world to say that, though the pedant might have brought cumbrous proofs

of a few trivial points, Boyle had won a signal victory in "wit, taste, and breeding."

Swift's "Battle of the Books" was begun when he was living with Sir William Temple at Moor Park in 1697. It was suggested by a French satire, Coutray's *Histoïre Poétique de la guerre nouvellement déclarée entre les anciens et les modernes*, and referred to Bentley's *first* Dissertation, which had just appeared. Temple was feeling sore, and Swift wished to please him. But its circulation was only private until it was published with the "Tale of a Tub" in 1704. Temple had then been dead five years. If Bentley's victory had then been universally recognised as crushing, Swift would have been running the risk of turning the laugh against himself; and no man, so fond of wounding, liked that less. In the "Battle of the Books," Boyle is Achilles, clad in armour wrought by the gods. The character ascribed to Bentley and Wotton is expressed in the Homeric similes which adorn the grand battle at the end. "As a Woman in a little House, that gets a painful livelihood by spinning; if chance her Geese be scattered o'er the Common, she courses round the plain from side to side, compelling, here and there, the stragglers to the flock; they cackle loud, and flutter o'er the champain: so Boyle pursued, so fled this Pair of Friends. . . . As when a skilful Cook has truss'd a brace of Woodcocks, he, with iron Skewer, pierces the tender sides of both, their legs and wings close pinion'd to their ribs; so was this Pair of Friends transfix'd, till down they fell, join'd in their lives, join'd in their deaths; so closely join'd that Charon would mistake them both for one, and waft them over Styx for half his fare." When this was first published, Bentley's second Dissertation had been five years before the public.

Against this satire—so purely popular that it lost nothing by being whetted on the wrong edge—we must set two pieces of contemporary evidence to Bentley's immediate success with his own limited audience. In discussing the age of Pythagoras, he had said: "I do not pretend to pass my own judgment, or to determine positively on either side; but I submit the whole to the censure of such readers as are well versed in ancient learning; and particularly to that incomparable historian and chronologer, the Right Reverend the Bishop of Coventry and Litchfield." In the same year (1699) Dr. Lloyd responded by publishing his views on the question, prefaced by a dedicatory epistle to Bentley. The other testimony is of a different kind, but not less significant. "A Short Review" of the controversy appeared in 1701. It was anonymous. Dyce says that a friend of his possessed a copy in which an early eighteenth century hand had written, "by Dr. Atterbury." The internal evidence leaves no doubt of this. I may notice one indication of it, which does not appear to have been remarked. We have seen that the "Examination" of Bentley's first essay was edited, and in great part written, by Atterbury. This ends with these words: "I fancy that the reader will be glad to have . . . the Dr.'s Picture in Miniature," rather "than that it shou'd be again drawn out *at full length*." The "picture in miniature" is the "Index" already mentioned above. Now the "Short Review" ends with "the Dr.'s Advantagious Character of himself *at full length*." The writer of this "Character" is clearly going back on his own footsteps: and that writer can be no other than Atterbury. He is very angry, and intensely bitter. He hints that Whig interest has bolstered up Bentley against Tory opponents. With almost incredible violence, he accuses Bentley of

"lying, stealing, and prevaricating" (p. 12). He contrasts the character of a "Critic" with that of a "Gentleman." Stress is laid on the imputation that Bentley had attacked not Boyle alone, but also the illustrious society in which Boyle had been educated. The members of that society (Atterbury remarks) are not cut all alike, as Bushels are by Winchester-measure: "But they are men of different Talents, Principles, Humours, and Interests, who are seldom or never united save when some unreasonable oppression from abroad fastens them together, and consequently whatever ill is said of all of them is falsely said of many of them." "To answer the reflexion of a private Gentleman with a general abuse of the Society he belong'd to, is the manners of a dirty Boy upon a Country-Green." It will not avail Bentley that his friends "style him a Living Library, a Walking Dictionary, and a Constellation of Criticism." A solitary gleam of humour varies this strain. Some wiseacre had suggested that the Letters of Phalaris might corrupt the crowned heads of Europe, if kings should take up the Agrigentine tyrant as Alexander the Great took up Homer, and put him under their pillows at night. "I objected"—says the author of the "Short Review"—"that now, since the advancement of Learning and Civility in the world, Princes were more refined, and would be ashamed of such acts of Barbarity as Phalaris was guilty of in a ruder age." But the alarmist stuck to his point; urging that "his Czarish Majesty" (Peter the Great, then in the twelfth year of his reign) might have met with the Letters of Phalaris in his travels, and that "his curiosity might have led him to make a Brazen Bull, when he came home, to burn his Rebells in." The piece ends by renewing the charge of plagiarism against Bent-

ley. Considering that the second Dissertation had now been out two years, this is a curiosity of literature: "*Common Pilferers will still go on in their trade, even after they have suffer'd for it.*"

But, when Bentley's Dissertation had been published for half a century, surely there can have been no longer any doubt as to the completeness of his victory? We shall see. In 1749, seven years after Bentley's death, an English Translation of the Letters of Phalaris was published by Thomas Francklin. He had been educated at Westminster School, and was then a resident Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge; his translation of Sophocles is still well known. He dedicates his version of Phalaris to John, Earl of Orrery, alluding to the esteem in which the Greek author had been held by the late Lord Orrery (Charles Boyle). He then refers to "the celebrated dispute" between Boyle and Bentley about these Letters. "Doctor Bentley," he allows, "was always look'd on as a man of wit and parts." On the other hand, Francklin vindicates Boyle against "the foolish opinion" that he had been helped by "some men of distinguished merit" in his book against Bentley. Had this been so, those men would have been eager to claim their share in the reputation acquired by it. As they have not done so, there can be no reason why Boyle's "claim to the deserved applause it has met with should ever for the future be call'd in question." "I have not enter'd into any of the points of the controversy," Francklin proceeds, "as it would be a disagreeable as well as unnecessary task, but shall only observe that, tho' *several very specious arguments are brought by Doctor Bentley, the strongest of them do only affect particular epistles; which, as Mr. Boyle observes, do not hurt the whole body;* for in a collection

of pieces that have no dependence on each other, as epistles, epigrams, fables, the first number may be encreased by the wantonness and vanity of imitators in aftertimes, and *yet the book be authentic in the main, and an original still.*"

Francklin was not outraging the sense of a learned community by writing thus. In the very next year (1750) he was elected to the Regius Professorship of Greek. Nothing could show more conclusively the average state of literary opinion on the controversy half a century after it took place. But there is evidence which carries us fifty years lower still. In 1804 Cumberland, Bentley's grandson, was writing his *Memoirs*. "I got together" (he says) "all the tracts relative to the controversy between Boyle and Bentley, omitting none even of the authorities and passages they referred to, and having done this, I compressed the reasonings on both sides into a kind of statement and report upon the question in dispute; and if, in the result, my judgment went with him to whom my inclination lent, *no learned critic in the present age* will condemn me for the decision." Such was the apologetic tone which Bentley's grandson still thought due to the world, even after Tyrwhitt had written of the "thunderbolt," and Porson of the "immortal Dissertation!" The theory that Bentley had an immediate triumph does not represent the general impression of his own age, but reflects the later belief of critical scholars, who felt the crushing power of Bentley's reply, and imagined that every one must have felt it when it first appeared. The tamer account of the matter, besides being the truer, is also far more really interesting. It shows how long the clearest truth may have to wait.

Bentley's Dissertation was translated into Latin by the

Dutch scholar, John Daniel Lennep, who edited the Letters of Phalaris. After Lennep's death, the translation and the edition were published together by Valckenaer (1777). The Dissertation was subsequently rendered into German, with notes, by Ribbeck; and only seven years ago (1874) the English text of the Dissertation (both in its first and in its second form) was re-issued in Germany, with Introduction and notes, by Dr. Wilhelm Wagner. It has thus been the destiny of Bentley's work, truly a work of genius, to become in the best sense monumental. In a literature of which continual supersession is the law, it has owed this permanent place to its triple character as a storehouse of erudition, an example of method, and a masterpiece of controversy. Isaac Disraeli justly said of it that "it heaves with the workings of a master spirit." Bentley's learning everywhere bears the stamp of an original mind; and, even where it can be corrected by modern lights, has the lasting interest of showing the process by which an intellect of rare acuteness reached approximately true conclusions. As a consecutive argument it represents the first sustained application of strict reasoning to questions of ancient literature—a domain in which his adversaries, echoing the sentiment of their day, declared that "all is but a lucky guess." As a controversial reply, it is little less than marvellous, if we remember that his very clever assailants had been unscrupulous in their choice of weapons—freely using every sort of insinuation, however irrelevant or gross, which could tell—and that Bentley repulsed them at every point, without once violating the usages of legitimate warfare. While he demolishes, one by one, the whole series of their relevant remarks, he steadily preserves his own dignity by simply turning back upon them the dishonour of their own calumnies and the ridicule of their own impertinence.

With a dexterity akin to that of a consummate debater, he wields the power of retort in such a manner that he appears to be hardly more than the amused spectator of a logical recoil.

Shortly before Swift described Boyle as Achilles, poor Achilles was writing from Ireland, in some perturbation of spirit, to those gods who were hard at work on his armour, and confiding his hopes "that it would do no harm." It did not do much. This was the first controversy in English letters that had made anything like a public stir, and it is pleasant to think that Achilles and his antagonist appear to have been good friends afterwards: if any ill-will lingered, it was rather in the bosoms of the Myrmidons. Dr. William King, who had helped to make the mischief, never forgave Bentley for his allusions to "Humty-dumty," and satirised him in ten "Dialogues of the Dead" (on Lucian's model)—a title which suits their dulness. Bentley is Bentivoglio, a critic who knows that the first weather-cock was set up by the Argonauts and that cushions were invented by Sardanapalus. Salter mentions a tradition, current in 1777, that Boyle, after he became Lord Orrery, visited Bentley at Trinity College, Cambridge. There is contemporary evidence, not, indeed, for such personal intercourse, but for the existence of mutual esteem. In 1721 a weekly paper, *The Spy*, attacked Bentley in an article mainly patched up out of thefts from Boyle's book on Phalaris, and a reply appeared, called "The Apothecary's Defence of Dr. Bentley, in answer to the Spy." "Let me now tell it the Spy as a secret," says the Apothecary, "that Dr. Bentley has the greatest deference for his noble antagonist (Boyle), both as a person of eminent parts and quality; and I dare say his noble antagonist thinks of Dr. Bentley as of a person as great

in critical learning as England has boasted of for many a century." We remember Bentley's description of Boyle as "a young gentleman of great hopes," and gladly believe that the Apothecary was as well informed as his tone would imply. Atterbury was in later life on excellent terms with Bentley.

It is long enough now since "the sprinkling of a little dust" allayed the last throb of angry passion that had been roused by the Battle of the Books: but we look back across the years, and see more than the persons of the quarrel; it was the beginning of a new epoch in criticism; and it is marked by a work which, to this hour, is classical in a twofold sense, in relation to the literature of England and to the philology of Europe.

CHAPTER VI.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

Towards the end of 1699, about eight months after the publication of Bentley's Dissertation on Phalaris, the Mastership of Trinity College, Cambridge, became vacant by the removal of Dr. Mountague to the Deanery of Durham. The nomination of a successor rested with six Commissioners, to whom King William had entrusted the duty of advising in the ecclesiastical and academic patronage of the Crown. They were Archbishops Tenison and Sharp, with Bishops Lloyd, Burnet, Patrick, and Moore — the last-named in place of Stillingfleet, who had died in April, 1699. On their unanimous recommendation, the post was given to Bentley. He continued to hold the office of King's Librarian; but his home thenceforth was at Cambridge.

No places in England have suffered so little as Oxford and Cambridge from the causes which tend to merge local colour in a monochrome. The academic world which Bentley entered is still, after a hundred and eighty years, comparatively near to us, both in form and in spirit. The visitor in 1700, whom the coach conveyed in twelve hours from the "Bull" in Bishopsgate Street to the "Rose" in the Market-place of Cambridge, found a scene of which the

essential features were the same as they are to-day. The most distinctive among the older buildings of the University had long been such as we now see them; already for nearly two centuries the chapel of King's College had been standing in the completeness of its majestic beauty; the charm of the past could already be felt in the quadrangles and cloisters of many an ancient house, in pleasant shades and smooth lawns by the quiet river, in gardens with margins of bright flowers bordering time-stained walls, over which the sound of bells from old towers came like an echo of the middle age, in all the haunts which tradition linked with domestic memories of cherished names. It was only the environment of the University that was decidedly unlike the present. In the narrow streets of the little town, where feeble oil-lamps flickered at night, the projecting upper stories of the houses on either side approached each other so nearly overhead as partly to supply the place of umbrellas. The few shops that existed were chiefly open booths, with the goods displayed on a board which also served as a shutter to close the front. That great wilderness of peat-moss which once stretched from Cambridge to the Wash had not yet been drained with the thoroughness which has since reclaimed two thousand square miles of the best corn-land in England; tracts of fen still touched the outskirts of the town; snipe and marsh-fowl were plentiful in the present suburbs. To the south and south-east the country was unenclosed, as it remained, in great measure, down to the beginning of this century. A horseman might ride for miles without seeing a fence.

The broadest difference between the University life of Bentley's time and of our own might perhaps be roughly described by saying that, for the older men, it had more

resemblance, both in its rigours and in its laxities, to the life of a monastery, and, for the younger men, to the life of a school. The College day began with morning chapel, usually at six. Breakfast was not a regular meal, but, from about 1700, it was often taken at a coffee-house where the London newspapers could be read. Morning lectures began at seven or eight in the College hall. Tables were set apart for different subjects. At "the logick table" one lecturer is expounding Duncan's treatise, while another, at "the ethick table," is interpreting Puffendorf on the Duty of a Man and a Citizen; classics and mathematics engage other groups. The usual College dinner-hour, which had long been 11 A.M., had advanced before 1720 to noon. The afternoon disputations in the Schools often drew large audiences to hear "respondent" and "opponent" discuss such themes as "Natural Philosophy does not tend to atheism," or "Matter cannot think." Evening chapel was usually at five; a slight supper was provided in hall at seven or eight; and at eight in winter, or nine in summer, the College gates were locked. All students lodged within College walls. Some tutors held evening lectures in their rooms. Discipline was stern. The birch-rod which was still hung up at the butteries typified a power in the College dean similar to that which the fasces announced in the Roman Consul; and far on in the seventeenth century it was sometimes found to be more than an austere symbol, when a youth showed himself, as Anthony Wood has it, "too forward, pragmatic, and conceited." Boating, in the athletic sense, was hardly known till about 1820, and the first record of cricket in its present form is said to be the match of Kent against England in 1746; but the undergraduates of Bentley's day played tennis, racquets, and

bowls; they rang peals on church-bells; they gave concerts; nay, we hear that the votaries "of Handel and Corelli" (the Italian violinist) were not less earnest than those of Newton and Locke. In Bentley's Cambridge the sense of a corporate life was strengthened by continuous residence. Many Fellows of Colleges, and some undergraduates, never left the University from one year's end to another. An excursion to the Bath or to Epsom Wells was the equivalent of a modern vacation-tour. No reading-party had yet penetrated to the Lakes or the Highlands. No summer fêtes yet brought an influx of guests; the nearest approach to anything of the kind was the annual Sturbridge Fair in September, held in fields near the Cam, just outside the town. The seclusion of the University world is curiously illustrated by the humorous speeches which old custom allowed on certain public occasions. The sallies of the academic satirist were to the Cambridge of that period very much what the Old Comedy was for the Athens of Aristophanes. The citizens of a compact commonwealth could be sufficiently entertained by lively criticism of domestic affairs, or by pointed allusions to the conduct of familiar persons.

In relation to the studies of Cambridge the moment of Bentley's arrival was singularly opportune. The theories of Descartes had just been exploded by that Newtonian philosophy which Bentley's Boyle Lectures had first popularised; in alliance with Newton's principles, a mathematical school was growing; and other sciences also were beginning to flourish. Between 1702 and 1727 the University was provided with chairs of Astronomy, Anatomy, Geology, and Botany; whilst the academic study of Medicine was also placed on a better footing. George I. founded the chair of Modern History in 1724. For classical

learning the latter part of the seventeenth century had been a somewhat sterile period. There was thus a two-fold function for a man of comprehensive vigour, holding an eminent station in the University—to foster the new learning, and to reanimate the old. Bentley proved himself equal to both tasks.

On February 1, 1700, the Fellows of Trinity College met in the chapel for the purpose of admitting their new Master. Bentley took the Latin oath, promising (amongst other undertakings) that he would "observe in all things the Statutes of the College, and interpret them truly, sincerely, and according to their grammatical sense;" that he would "rule and protect all and singular Fellows and Scholars, Pensioners, Sizars, Subsizars, and the other members of the College, according to the same Statutes and Laws, without respect of birth, condition, or person, without favour or ill-will;" that, in the event of his resigning or being deposed, he would restore all that was due to the College "without controversy or tergiversation." He was then installed in the Master's seat, and his reign began.

Bentley had just completed his thirty-eighth year. He had a genius for scholarship, which was already recognised. He had also that which does not always accompany it, a large enthusiasm for the advancement of learning. His powers of work were extraordinary, and his physical strength was equal to almost any demand which even he could make upon it. Seldom has a man of equal gifts been placed at so early an age in a station which offered such opportunities.

Henry VIII. founded Trinity College only a few weeks before his death. Two establishments, each more than two centuries old, then stood on the site of the present

Great Court. One of these was Michael-house, founded in 1324 by Hervey de Stanton, Chancellor to Edward II. The other, King's Hall, was founded in 1337 by Edward III., who assigned it to the King's Scholars, thirty or forty students, maintained at Cambridge by a royal bounty, first granted by Edward II. in 1316. Thus, whilst Michael-house was the older College, King's Hall represented the older foundation. When Henry VIII. united them, the new name, "Trinity College," was probably taken from Michael-house, which, among other titles, had been dedicated to the Holy and Undivided Trinity. The Reformation had been a crisis in the history of the English Universities. In 1546 their fortunes were almost at the lowest ebb. That fact adds significance to the terms in which Henry's charter traces the noble plan of Trinity College. The new house is to be a "college of literature, the sciences, philosophy, good arts, and sacred Theology." It is founded "to the glory and honour of Almighty God and the Holy and Undivided Trinity; for the amplification and establishment of the Christian faith; the extirpation of heresy and false opinion; the increase and continuance of Divine Learning and all kinds of good letters; the knowledge of the tongues; the education of youth in piety, virtue, learning, and science; the relief of the poor, destitute, and afflicted; the prosperity of the Church of Christ; and the common good of his kingdom and subjects."

The King had died before this conception could be embodied in legislative enactment. Statutes were made for Trinity College in the reign of Edward VI., and again in the reign of Mary. Manuscript copies of these are preserved in the Muniment-room of the College; but the first printed code of Statutes was that given in the

second year of Elizabeth. These governed Trinity College until a revision produced the "Victorian" Statutes of 1844. Two features of the Elizabethan Statutes deserve notice. All the sixty Fellowships are left open, without appropriation to counties—whilst at every other Cambridge College, except King's, territorial restrictions existed till this century. And, besides the College Lecturers, maintenance is assigned to three University Readers. These are the Regius Professors of Divinity, Hebrew, and Greek, who are still on Henry VIII.'s foundation. Thus, from its origin, Trinity College was specially associated with two ideas: free competition of merit; and provision, not only for collegiate tuition, but also for properly academic teaching.

During the first century of its life—from the reign of Edward VI. to the Civil Wars—the prosperity of Trinity College was brilliant and unbroken. The early days of the Great Rebellion were more disastrous for Cambridge than for Oxford; yet at Cambridge, as at Oxford, the period of the Commonwealth was one in which learning throve. Trinity College was "purged" of its Royalist members in 1645. Dr. Thomas Hill then became Master. He proved an excellent administrator. Isaac Barrow, who was an undergraduate of the College, had written an exercise on "the Gunpowder Treason," in which his Cavalier sympathies were frankly avowed. Some of the Fellows were so much incensed that they moved for his expulsion, when Hill silenced them with the words, "Barrow is a better man than any of us." The last Master of Trinity before the Restoration was Dr. John Wilkins, brother-in-law of Oliver Cromwell, and formerly Warden of Wadham College, Oxford; who was "always zealous to promote worthy men and generous designs." He was shrewdly

suspected of being a Royalist, and Cromwell had been wont to greet his visits thus: "What, brother Wilkins, I suppose you are come to ask something or other in favour of the Malignants?" But his influence is said to have decided the Protector against confiscating the revenues of Oxford and Cambridge to pay his army.*

In the space of forty years between the Restoration and Bentley's arrival, Trinity College had suffered some decline; not through any default of eminent abilities or worthy characters, but partly from general influences of the time, partly from the occasional want of a sufficiently firm rule. Dr. John Pearson—the author of the treatise on the Creed—was Master of Trinity from 1662 to 1673. A contemporary—whose words plainly show the contrast with Bentley which was in his mind—said that Pearson was "a man the least apt to encroach upon anything that belonged to the Fellows, but treated them all with abundance of civility and condescension." "The Fellows, he has heard, ask'd him whether he wanted anything in his lodge—table-linen, or the like; 'No,' saith the good man, 'I think not; this I have will serve yet;' and though pressed by his wife to have new, especially as it was offered him, he would refuse it while the old was fit for use. He was very well contented with what the College allowed him."

* See a letter, preserved in the Muniment-room of Trinity College, Cambridge, and published by Mr. W. Aldis Wright in *Notes and Queries*, Aug. 13, 1881. I may remark that Dr. Creyghton, whose recollections in old age the letter reports, errs in one detail. It must have been as Warden of Wadham, not as Master of Trinity, that Wilkins interceded against the confiscation. Oliver Cromwell died Sept. 3, 1658. It was early in 1659 that Richard Cromwell appointed Wilkins to Trinity College.

Pearson was succeeded in the Mastership by Isaac Barrow, who held it for only four years—from 1673 to his death in 1677. Both as a mathematician and as a theologian he stood in the foremost rank. In 1660 he was elected "without a competitor" to the professorship of Greek. Thus a singular triad of distinctions is united in his person; as Lucasian professor of Mathematics, he was the predecessor of Newton; at Trinity College, of Bentley; and, in his other chair, of Porson. In early boyhood he was chiefly remarkable for his pugnacity, and for his aversion to books. When he was at Charterhouse, "his greatest recreation was in such sports as brought on fighting among the boys; in his after-time a very great courage remained . . . yet he had perfectly subdued all inclination to quarrelling; but a negligence of his cloaths did always continue with him." As Master of Trinity, "besides the particular assistance he gave to many in their studies, he concerned himself in everything that was for the interest of his College."

The next two Masters were men of a different type. John North was the fifth son of Dudley, Lord North, and younger brother of Francis North, first Baron Guilford, Lord Keeper in the reigns of Charles II. and James II. He had been a Fellow of Jesus College, and in 1677 he was appointed Master of Trinity. John North was a man of cultivated tastes and considerable accomplishments, of a gentle, very sensitive disposition, and of a highly nervous temperament. Even after he was a Fellow of his College, he once mistook a moonlit towel for "an enorm spectre;" and his brother remembers how, at a still later period, "one Mr. Wagstaff, a little gentleman, had an express audience, at a very good dinner, on the subject of spectres, and much was said *pro* and *con*." On one occasion he

travelled into Wales, "to visit and be possessed of his sinecure of Llandinon." "The parishioners came about him and hugged him, calling him their pastor, and telling him they were his sheep;" when "he got him back to his College as fast as he could." In the Mastership of Trinity North showed no weakness. Certain abuses had begun to infect the election to Fellowships, and he made a vigorous effort to remedy them. He was no less firm in his endeavours to revive discipline, which had been somewhat relaxed since the Restoration. One day he was in the act of admonishing two students, when he fell down in a fit. The two young men were "very helpful" in carrying him to the Lodge. Paralysis of one side ensued. He lived for upwards of three years, but could thenceforth take little part in College affairs; and died, six years after he had become Master, in 1683.

Dr. John Mountague, North's successor, was the fourth son of Edward, first Earl of Sandwich. The little that is known of Mountague exhibits him as an amiable person of courtly manners, who passed decently along the path of rapid preferment which then awaited a young divine with powerful connexions. Having first been Master of Sherburn Hospital at Durham, he was appointed, in 1683, to the Mastership of Trinity. His easy temper and kindly disposition made him popular with the Fellows—all the more so, perhaps, if his conscience was less exacting than that of the highly-strung, anxious North. In 1699 he returned, as Dean of Durham, to the scene of his earlier duties, and lived to see the fortunes of the College under Bentley. He died in London, in 1728. There was a double disadvantage for Bentley in coming after such a man; the personal contrast was marked; and those tendencies which North strove to repress had not suffered,

under Mountague, from any interference which exceeded the limits of good breeding.

In the fore-front of the difficulties which met Bentley Dr. Monk puts the fact that he "had no previous connexion with the College which he was sent to govern; he was himself educated in another and a rival society." Now, without questioning that there were murmurs on this score, I think that we shall overrate the influence of such a consideration if we fail to observe what the precedents had been up to that date. Bentley was the twentieth Master since 1546. Of his nineteen predecessors, only five had been educated at Trinity College. To take the four immediately preceding cases, Barrow and Mountague had been of Trinity, but Pearson had been of King's, and North of Jesus. Since Bentley's time every Master has been of Trinity. But it cannot be said that any established usage then existed of which Bentley's appointment was a breach. And young though he was for such a post—thirty-eight—he was not young beyond recent example. Pearson, when appointed, had been forty; Barrow, forty-three; North, thirty-three; and Mountague, only twenty-eight. Thus the choice was not decidedly exceptional in either of the two points which might make it appear so now. But the task which, at that moment, awaited a Master of Trinity was one which demanded a rare union of qualities. How would Bentley succeed? A few readers of the Dissertation on Phalaris, that mock despot of Agrigentum, might tremble a little, perhaps, at the thought that the scholarly author appeared to have a robust sense of what a real tyrant should be, and a cordial contempt for all shams in the part. It was natural, however, to look with hope to his mental grasp and vigour, his energy, his penetration, his genuine love of learning.

CHAPTER VII.

BENTLEY AS MASTER OF TRINITY.

When Bentley entered on his new office, he was in one of those positions where a great deal may depend on the impression made at starting. He did not begin very happily. One of his first acts was to demand part of a College dividend due by usage to his predecessor, Dr. Mountague, who closed the discussion by waiving his claim. Then the Master's Lodge required repairs, and the Seniority (the eight Senior Fellows) had voted a sum for that purpose, but the works were executed in a manner which ultimately cost about four times the amount. It is easy to imagine the comments and comparisons to which such things would give rise in a society not, perhaps, too favourably prepossessed towards their new chief. But Bentley's first year at Trinity is marked by at least one event altogether fortunate — his marriage. At Bishop Stillingfleet's house he had met Miss Joanna Bernard, daughter of Sir John Bernard, of Brampton, Huntingdonshire. "Being now raised to a station of dignity and consequence, he succeeded in obtaining the object of his affections," says Dr. Monk—who refuses to believe a story that the engagement was nearly broken off owing to a doubt expressed by Bentley with regard to the authority of the Book of Daniel. Whiston has

told us what this alleged doubt was. Nebuchadnezzar's golden image is described as sixty cubits high and six cubits broad; now, said Bentley, this is out of all proportion; it ought to have been ten cubits broad at least; "which made the good lady weep." The lovers' difference was possibly arranged on the basis suggested by Whiston — that the sixty cubits included the pedestal. Some letters which passed between Dr. Bentley and Miss Bernard, before their marriage, are still extant, and have been printed by Dr. Luard at the end of Rud's *Diary*. In the Library of Trinity College is preserved a small printed and interleaved "Ephemeris" for the year 1701. The blank page opposite the month of January has the following entries in Bentley's hand:

"Jan. 4. I maried Mrs. Johanna Bernard, daughter of S^r^ John Bernard, Baronet. D^r^ Richardson, Fellow of Eaton College and Master of Peterhouse, maried us at Windsor in y^e^ College Chapel.

"6. I brought my wife to S^t^ James's [*i. e.*, to his lodgings, as King's Librarian, in the Palace].

"27. I am 39 years old, complete.

"28. I returnd to ye College."

It was a thoroughly happy marriage, through forty years of union. What years they were, too, outside of the home in which Mrs. Bentley's gentle presence dwelt! In days when evil tongues were busy no word is said of her but in praise; and perhaps, if all were known, few women ever went through more in trying, like Mrs. Thrale, to be civil for two.

Bentley was Vice-chancellor of Cambridge at the time of his marriage. His year of office brought him into collision with the gaieties of that great East England carnival, Sturbridge Fair. Its entertainments were under the joint control of the University and the Town, but, without

licence from the Vice-chancellor, some actors had been announced to play in September, 1701. Bentley interposed his veto, and provided for discipline by investing sixty-two Masters of Arts with the powers of Proctors. One of his last acts as Vice-chancellor was to draw up an address which the University presented to King William, expressing "detestation of the indignity" which Louis XIV. had just offered to the English Crown by recognising the claims of the Pretender.

The term of his University magistracy having expired, Bentley was able to bestow undivided attention on Trinity College. An important reform was amongst his earliest measures. Fellowships and Scholarships were at that time awarded by a merely oral examination. Written papers were now introduced; the competition for Scholarships became annual instead of biennial, and freshmen were admitted to it. The permanent value of this change is not affected by the estimate which may be formed of Bentley's personal conduct in College elections. There are instances in which it was represented as arbitrary and unfair. But we must remember that his behaviour was closely watched by numerous enemies, who eagerly pressed every point which could be plausibly urged against him. The few detailed accounts which we have of the elections give the impression that, in those cases at least, the merits of candidates were fairly considered. Thus John Byrom says (1709): "We were examined by the Master, Vice-master, and Dr. Smith, one of the Seniors. On Wednesday we made theme for Dr. Bentley, and on Thursday the Master and Seniors met in the Chapel for the election [to Scholarships]. Dr. Smith had the gout and was not there. They stayed consulting about an hour and a half, and then the Master wrote the names of the elect and gave them to

the Chapel Clerk." Whether he was or was not always blameless on such occasions, Bentley deserves to be remembered as the Master who instituted a better machinery for testing merit, and provided better guarantees for its recognition.

To do him justice, no man could have been more earnest than Bentley was in desiring to maintain the prestige of Trinity College, or more fully sensible of the rank due to it in science and letters. It was through Bentley's influence that the newly-founded Plumian Professorship of Astronomy was conferred on Roger Cotes—then only a Bachelor of Arts—who was provided with an observatory in the rooms over the Great Gate of Trinity College (1706). Ten years later, when this man of wonderful promise died at the age of thirty-four, Newton said, "Had Cotes lived, we should have known something." The appointment of Cotes may be regarded as marking the formal establishment of a Newtonian school in Cambridge; and it was of happy omen that it should have been first lodged within the walls which had sheltered the labours of the founder. Three English sovereigns visited the College in the course of Bentley's Mastership, but the most interesting fact connected with any of these occasions is the public recognition of Newton's scientific eminence in 1705, when he received knighthood from Queen Anne at Trinity Lodge. Then it was Bentley who fitted up a chemical laboratory in Trinity College for Vigani, a native of Verona, who, after lecturing in Cambridge for some years, was appointed Professor of Chemistry in 1702. It was Bentley who made Trinity College the home of the eminent Oriental scholar Sike, of Bremen, whom he helped to obtain the Regius Chair of Hebrew in 1703. Briefly, wherever real science needed protection or encouragement,

there, in Bentley's view, was the opportunity of Trinity College; it was to be indeed a house of the sciences and "of all kinds of good letters;" it was to be not only a great College, but, in its own measure, a true University.

This noble conception represents the good side of Bentley's Mastership; he did something towards making it a reality; he did more still towards creating, or reanimating, a tradition that this is what Trinity College was meant to be, and that nothing lower than this is the character at which it should aim. Nor is it without significance that Nevile's care for the external embellishment of the College was resumed by Bentley. The Chapel, begun in 1557 and finished in Elizabeth's reign, was through Bentley's efforts entirely refitted, and furnished with a fine organ by Bernard Smith. This work was completed in 1727. The grounds beyond the river, acquired by Nevile, were first laid out by Bentley; and the noble avenue of limes, planted in 1674 on the west side of the Cam, was continued in 1717 from the bridge to the College.

But unfortunately it was his resolve to be absolute, and he proclaimed it in a manner which was altogether his own. The College Bursar (a Fellow) having protested against the lavish outlay on the repairs of the Master's Lodge, Bentley said that he would "send him into the country to feed his turkeys." When the Fellows opposed him in the same matter, he alluded to his power, under the Statutes, of forbidding them to leave the College, and cried, "Have you forgotten my rusty sword?" The Fellow who held the office of Junior Bursar had demurred to paying for a hen-house which had been put in the Master's yard; Bentley, doubtless in allusion to Lafontaine's fable of "the Old Lion," replied, "I will not be kicked by

an *ass*"—and presently strained his prerogative by stopping the Junior Bursar's commons. Remonstrances being made, he grimly rejoined, "'Tis all but *lusus jocusque* (mere child's-play); I am not warm yet." Criticising a financial arrangement which was perfectly legitimate, but of which he disapproved, he accused the Seniors of "robbing the Library," and "putting the money in their own pockets." He harassed the society by a number of petty regulations, in which we may give him credit for having aimed at a tonic effect, but which were so timed and executed as to be highly vexatious. Thus, in order to force the Fellows to take the higher degrees, he procured the decision, after a struggle, that any Bachelor or Doctor of Divinity should have a right to College rooms or a College living before a Master of Arts, even though the latter was senior on the list of Fellows. As a measure of retrenchment, he abolished the entertainment of guests by the College at the great festivals. Taking the dead letter of the Statutes in its rigour, he decreed that the College Lecturers should be fined if they omitted to perform certain daily exercises in the hall, which were no longer needful or valuable; he also enforced, in regard to the thirty junior Fellows, petty fines for absence from chapel (which were continued to recent times). On several occasions he took into his own hands a jurisdiction which belonged to him only jointly with the eight Seniors. Thus, in one instance, he expelled two Fellows of the College by his sole fiat.

If Bentley is to be credited with the excellence of the intentions which declared themselves in such a form, recognition is certainly due to the forbearance shown by the Fellows of Trinity. Bentley afterwards sought to represent them as worthless men who resented his endeavours

to reform them. It cannot be too distinctly said that this was totally unjust. The Fellows, as a body, were liable to no such charges as Bentley in his anger brought against them; not a few of them were eminent in the University; and if there were any whose lives would not bear scrutiny, they were at most two or three, usually non-resident, and always without influence. It may safely be said that no large society of that time, in either University, would have sustained an inspection with more satisfactory results. The average College Fellow of that period was a moderately accomplished clergyman, whose desire was to repose in decent comfort on a small freehold. Bentley swooped on a large house of such persons—not ideal students, yet, on the whole, decidedly favourable specimens of their kind; he made their lives a burden to them, and then denounced them as the refuse of humanity when they dared to lift their heads against his insolent assumption of absolute power. They bore it as long as flesh and blood could. For nearly eight years they endured. At last, in December, 1709, things came to a crisis—almost by an accident.

Bentley had brought forward a proposal for redistributing the divisible income of the College according to a scheme of his own, one feature of which was that the Master should receive a dividend considerably in excess of his legitimate claims. Even Bentley's authority failed to obtain the acquiescence of the Seniors in this novel interpretation of the maxim, *divide et impera*. They declined to sanction the scheme. While the discussion was pending, Edmund Miller, a lay Fellow, came up to spend the Christmas vacation at Trinity. As an able barrister, who understood College business, he was just such an ally as the Fellows needed. He found them, he says, "looking

like so many prisoners, which were uncertain whether to expect military execution, or the favour of decimation." At a meeting of the Master and Seniors, it was agreed to hear Miller, as a representative of the junior Fellows, on the dividend question. Miller denounced the plan to Bentley's face, who replied by threatening to deprive him of his Fellowship. A few days later, an open rupture took place between the Seniors and Bentley, who left the room exclaiming, "Henceforward, farewell peace to Trinity College." Miller now drew up a declaration, which was signed by twenty-four resident Fellows, including the Seniors. It expressed a desire that Bentley's conduct should be represented "to those who are the proper judges thereof, and in such manner as counsel shall advise." Bentley, against the unanimous vote of the Seniors, and on a technical quibble of his own, now declared Miller's Fellowship void. Miller appealed to the Vice-master, who, supported by all the Seniors, replaced him on the list. The Master again struck out his name. Miller now left for London. Bentley soon followed. Both sides were resolved on war.

Who were "the proper judges" of Bentley's conduct? The 46th chapter of Edward VI.'s Statutes for Trinity College recognised the Bishop of Ely as General Visitor. The Elizabethan Statutes omit this, but in their 40th chapter, which provides for the removal of the Master in case of necessity, incidentally speak of the Bishop as Visitor. Bentley, six years before (1703), had himself appealed to the Bishop of Ely on a point touching the Master's prerogative. No other precedent existed. Acting on this, the Fellows, in February, 1710, laid their "humble petition and complaint" before the Bishop of Ely. They brought, in general terms, a charge of malversation against

Bentley, and promised to submit "the several particulars" within a convenient time. Bentley now published a "Letter to the Bishop of Ely," in which he made a most gross attack on the collective character of the Fellows, describing their Petition as "the last struggle and effort of vice and idleness against vertue, learning, and good discipline." In July the Fellows presented "the several particulars" to the Bishop, in the form of an accusation comprising fifty-four counts. The Statute prescribed that an accused Master should be "examined" before the Visitor. Hence each of the counts is interrogative. For example:

"Why have you for many Years last past, wasted the College Bread, Ale, Beer, Coals, Wood, Turfe, Sedge, Charcoal, Linnen, Pewter, Corn, Flower, Brawn, and Bran? &c."

"When by false and base Practices, as by threatning to bring Letters from Court, Visitations, and the like; and at other times, by boasting of your great Interest and Acquaintance, and that you were the Genius of the Age, and what great things you would do for the College in general, and for every Member of it in particular, and promising that you would for the future live peaceably with them, and never make any farther Demands, you had prevailed with the Senior Fellows to allow you several hundred Pounds for your Lodge, more than they first intended or agreed for, to the great Dissatisfaction of the College, and the wonder of the whole University, and all that heard of it: Why did you the very next Year, about that time, merely for your own Vanity, require them to build you a new Stair-case in your Lodge? And when they (considering how much you had extorted from them before, which you had never accounted for) did for good reason deny to do it: Why did you of your own Head pull down a good Stair-case in your Lodge, and give Orders and Directions for building a new one, and that too fine for common Use?"

"Why did you use scurrilous Words and Language to several of the Fellows, particularly by calling Mr. *Eden* an Ass, and Mr. *Rashly* the College Dog, and by telling Mr. *Cock* he would die in his Shoes?"

Dr. Moore, the learned Bishop of Ely, was one of the six Commissioners who had nominated Bentley for the Mastership; he sympathised with his studies; and Bentley had been Archdeacon of the diocese since 1701. The judge, then, could hardly be suspected of any bias against the accused. He sent a copy of the accusation to Bentley, who ignored it for some months. In November the Bishop wrote again, requiring a reply by December 18. Bentley then petitioned the Queen, praying that the Bishop of Ely might be restrained from usurping the functions of Visitor. The Visitor of Trinity College, Bentley contended, was the Sovereign. Mr. Secretary St. John at once referred Bentley's contention to the Law Officers of the Crown, and meanwhile the Bishop was inhibited from proceeding. This was at the end of 1710.

Bentley's move was part of a calculation. In 1710 the Tories had come in under Harley and St. John. Mrs. Bentley was related to St. John, and also to Mr. Masham, whose wife had succeeded the Duchess of Marlborough in the Queen's favour. Bentley reckoned on commanding sufficient influence to override the Bishop's jurisdiction by a direct interposition of the Crown. He was disappointed. The Attorney-general and the Solicitor-general reported that, in their opinion, the Bishop of Ely was Visitor of Trinity College in matters concerning the Master; adding that Bentley could, if he pleased, try the question in a court of law. This was not what Bentley desired. He now wrote to the Prime-minister, Harley, who had recently escaped assassination, and, with the office of Lord High Treasurer, had been created Earl of Oxford. Bentley's letter is dated July 12, 1711. "I desire nothing more," he writes, "than that her Majesty would send down commissioners to examine into all matters upon the place,

. . . and to punish where the faults shall be found. . . . I am easy under everything but loss of time by detainment here in town, which hinders me from putting my last hand to my edition of Horace, and from doing myself the honour to inscribe it to your Lordship's great name." The Premier did his best. He referred the report of the Attorney and Solicitor to the Lord Keeper, Sir Simon Harcourt, and Queen's Counsel. In January, 1712, they expressed their opinion that the Sovereign is the General Visitor of Trinity College, but that the Bishop of Ely is Special Visitor in the case of charges brought against the Master. The Minister now tried persuasion with the Fellows. Could they not concur with the Master in referring their grievances to the Crown? The Fellows declined. A year passed. Bentley tried to starve out the College by refusing to issue a dividend. In vain. The Ministry were threatened with a revision, in the Queen's Bench, of their veto on the Bishop. They did not like this prospect. On April 18, 1713, Bolingbroke, as Secretary of State, authorised the Bishop of Ely to proceed.

Bentley's ingenuity was not yet exhausted. He proposed that the trial should be held forthwith at Cambridge, where all the College books were ready to hand. Had this been done, he must certainly have been acquitted, since the prosecutors had not yet worked up their case. Some of the Fellows unwarily consented. But the Bishop appointed Ely House, in London, as the place of trial, and the month of November, 1713, as the time. Various causes of delay intervened. At last, in May, 1714, the trial came on in the great hall of Ely House. Five counsel, including Miller, were employed for the Fellows, and three for Bentley. Bishop Moore had two eminent lawyers as his assessors — Lord Cowper, an ex-

Chancellor, and Dr. Newton. Public feeling was at first with Bentley, as a distinguished scholar and divine. But the prosecutors had a strong case. An anecdote of the trial is given by Bentley's grandson, Cumberland. One day the Bishop intimated, from his place as Judge, that he condemned the Master's conduct. For once, Bentley's iron nerve failed him. He fainted in court.

After lasting six weeks, the trial ended about the middle of June. Both sides now awaited with intense anxiety the judgment of the Bishop and his assessors. The prosecutors were confident. But week after week elapsed in silence. The Bishop had caught a chill during the sittings. On July 31 he died. The next day, August 1, 1714, London was thrilled by momentous news. Queen Anne was no more. The British Crown had passed to the House of Hanover. Ministers had fallen; new men were coming to power; the political world was wild with excitement; and the griefs of Trinity College would have to wait.

Bentley's escape had been narrow. After Bishop Moore's death, the judgment which he had prepared, but not pronounced, was found among his papers: "By this our definitive sentence, we remove Richard Bentley from his office of Master of the College." Dr. Monk thinks that the Bishop had meant this merely to frighten Bentley into a compromise with the Fellows. Possibly; though in that case the Bishop would have had to reckon with the other side. But in any case Bentley must have accepted the Bishop's terms, and these must have been such as would have satisfied the prosecutors. If not ejected, therefore, he would still have been defeated. As it was, he got off scot-free.

The new Bishop of Ely, Dr. Fleetwood, took a different line from his predecessor. The Crown lawyers had held

that the Bishop was Special Visitor, but not General Visitor. Dr. Fleetwood said that, if he interfered at all, it must be as General Visitor, to do justice on all alike. This scared some of the weaker Fellows into making peace with Bentley, who kindly consented to drop his dividend scheme. In one sense the new Bishop's course was greatly to Bentley's advantage, since it raised the preliminary question over again. Miller vainly tried to move Dr. Fleetwood. Meanwhile Bentley was acting as autocrat of the College — dealing with its property and its patronage as he pleased. His conduct led to a fresh effort for redress.

The lead on this occasion was taken by Dr. Colbatch, now a Senior Fellow. From the beginning of the feuds, Colbatch had been a counsellor of moderation, disapproving much in the stronger measures advocated by Miller. He was an able and accomplished man, whose rigid maintenance of his own principles extorted respect even where it did not command sympathy. Colbatch's early manhood had been expended on performing the duties of private tutor in two families of distinction, and he had returned to College at forty, more convinced than ever that it is a mistake to put trust in princes. He was a dangerous enemy because he seemed incapable of revenge; it was always on high grounds that he desired the confusion of the wicked; and he pursued that object with the temperate implacability which belongs to a disappointed man of the world. Since the Bishop of Ely would not act unless as General Visitor, Colbatch drew up a petition, which nineteen Fellows signed, praying that it might be ascertained who was General Visitor. This was encouraged by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Wake—who described Bentley as "the greatest instance of human frailty that I know of, as with

such good parts and so much learning he can be so insupportable." The object of the petition was baulked for the time by the delays of the Attorney-general. After three years the petition came before the Privy Council in May, 1719.

Bentley was equal to the occasion. Serjeant Miller had presented the petition, and could withdraw it. For five years Bentley had been making active war on Miller, and renewing the attempt to eject him from his Fellowship. Now, towards the end of 1719, he made peace with him, on singular terms. Miller was to withdraw the petition; to resign his Fellowship, in consideration of certain payments; and to receive the sum of £400 as costs on account of the former prosecution before Bishop Moore. Miller agreed. Bentley then proposed the compact to the Seniors. Five of the eight would have nothing to say to it. By a series of manœuvres, however, Bentley carried it at a subsequent meeting. Serjeant Miller received £528 from the College. Who shall describe the feelings of the belligerent Fellows, when the Serjeant's strategy collapsed in this miserable Sedan? It was he who had made them go to war; it was he who had led them through the mazes of the law; they had caught his clear accents, learned his great language; and here was the end of it! But this was not all. If the College is to pay costs on one side, the Master argued, it must pay them on both. Accordingly, Bentley himself received £500 for his own costs in the trial. And, anxious to make hay in this gleam of sunshine, he further prevailed on the Seniors to grant a handsome sum for certain furniture of the Master's Lodge. Bentley had no more to fear, at present, from the opposition of an organised party. For the next few years his encounters were single combats.

Such was the state of affairs in Trinity College. Meanwhile Bentley's relations with the University had come to an extraordinary pass. From the first days of his Mastership his reputation, his ability and energy had made him influential in Cambridge, though he was not generally popular. We saw that, before his appointment to Trinity, he had taken a leading part in the reparation of the University Press. He continued to show an active interest in its management by serving on occasional committees; no permanent Press Syndicate was constituted till 1737. Politics were keen at the University in Bentley's time: a division in the academic Senate was often a direct trial of strength between Whig and Tory. When Bentley struck a blow in these University battles, it was almost always with a view to some advantage in his own College war. Two instances will illustrate this. In June, 1712, when acting as Deputy Vice-chancellor, Bentley carried in the Senate an address to Queen Anne, congratulating her on the progress of the peace negotiations at Utrecht. The address was meant as a manifesto in support of the Tory Ministry, whom the Whigs had just been attacking on this score in the Lords. At that time Harley, the Tory Premier, was the protector on whom Bentley relied in his College troubles. The irritation of the Whig party in the University may have been one cause of a severe reflection passed on Bentley soon afterwards. The Senate resolved that no Archdeacon of Ely should thenceforth be eligible as Vice-chancellor; a decree which, however, was rescinded two years later. Then in 1716 Bentley sorely needed the countenance of the Whig Government against the revived hostilities in Trinity. By a surprise he carried through the Senate an address to George I., congratulating him on the recent suppression of the Jacobite risings.

A letter of Bentley's describes the Cambridge Tories as being "in a desperate rage"—not wholly, perhaps, without provocation.

It was shortly before this—in the early days of the Jacobite rebellion, when visions of a Roman Catholic reign were agitating the public imagination—that Bentley preached before the University, on the 5th of November, 1715, his "Sermon on Popery"—from which a passage on the tortures of the Inquisition has been transferred by Sterne to the pages of "Tristram Shandy," and deeply moves Corporal Trim. Bentley had then lately received the unusual honour of being publicly thanked by the Senate for his reply to "A Discourse of Free-thinking" by Anthony Collins. When the Regius Professorship of Divinity—the most valuable in the University—fell vacant in 1717, few persons, perhaps, would have questioned Dr. Bentley's claims on the grounds of ability and learning. But the Statute had declared that the Professor must not hold any other office in the University or in Trinity College. Two precedents were alleged to show that a Master of Trinity might hold the Professorship, but they were not unexceptionable. Of the seven electors, three certainly—presumably five—were against the Master of Trinity's pretensions. The favourite candidate was Dr. Ashton, Master of Jesus; and there are letters to him which show the strong feeling in the University against his rival. On the whole, most men would have despaired. Not so Bentley. By raising a legal point, he contrived to stave off the election for a few weeks; and then seized a propitious moment. The Vice-chancellor was one of the seven electors. It was arranged that Mr. Grigg, who held that office, should leave Cambridge for a few days, naming Bentley Deputy Vice-chancellor. On the day of election the Master of Trinity

was chosen Regius Professor of Divinity by four out of seven votes, one of the four being that of the Deputy Vice-chancellor. It was in this candidature that Dr. Bentley delivered an admired discourse on the three heavenly witnesses, which denied the authenticity of that text. It is no longer extant, but had been seen by Porson, who himself wrote on the subject.

This was in May, 1717. Not long afterwards Bentley had occasion to appear publicly in his new character of Regius Professor. Early in October, George I. was staying at Newmarket. On Friday, the 4th, his Majesty consented to visit Cambridge on the following Sunday. There was not much time for preparation, but it was arranged to confer the degree of Doctor of Laws on twenty-seven of the royal retinue, and that of Doctor of Divinity on thirty-two members of the University. On Sunday morning Mr. Grigg, the Vice-chancellor, presented himself at Trinity Lodge, there to await the arrival of the Chancellor, "the proud Duke of Somerset." Bentley was unprepared for this honour; he was "in his morning gown," busied with meditations of hospitality or of eloquence; in fact, he remonstrated; but Mr. Grigg remained. At last the Chancellor came. Bentley was affable, but a little *distrait*. "While he entertained the Duke in discourse," says one who was present, "there stood the Earl of Thomond and Bishop of Norwich, unregarded: and there they might have stood, if one of the Beadles had not touched his sleeve a little; and then he vouchsafed them a welcome also." But worse was to come. George I. attended service at King's College Chapel. When it was over, the Vice-chancellor proceeded to conduct his Majesty back to Trinity College. But Mr. Grigg was desirous that royal eyes should behold his own College, Clare Hall, and there-

fore chose a route which led to a closed gate of Trinity College. Here a halt of some minutes took place in a muddy lane, before word could reach the principal entrance, where Bentley and an enthusiastic crowd were awaiting their Sovereign.

These little griefs, however, were nothing to the later troubles which this day's proceedings begat for Bentley. As it was thought that thirty-two new Doctors of Divinity might be too much for the King, Sunday's ceremonial had been limited to presenting a few of them as samples. Bentley, as Regius Professor of Divinity, had done his part admirably. But the next day, when the rest of the doctors were to be "created" at leisure, Bentley flatly refused to proceed, unless each of them paid him a fee of four guineas, in addition to the customary broad-piece. As the degrees were honorary, the claim was sheer extortion. Some complied, others resisted. Conyers Middleton, the biographer of Cicero, was at this time a resident in Cambridge, though no longer a Fellow of any College. He paid his four guineas, got his D.D. degree, and then sued Bentley for the debt in the Vice-chancellor's Court, a tribunal of academic jurisdiction in such matters. After months of fruitless diplomacy, the Vice-chancellor reluctantly issued a decree for Bentley's arrest at Middleton's suit. The writ was served on Bentley at Trinity Lodge—not, however, before one of the Esquire Bedells had been treated with indignity. Bail was given for Bentley's appearance before the Court on October 3, 1718. He failed to appear. The Court then declared that he was suspended from all his degrees. A fortnight later, a Grace was offered to the Senate, proposing that Bentley's degrees should be not merely suspended but taken away. Bentley's friends did their utmost. To the honour of the Fel-

lows of Trinity, only four of them voted against him. But the Grace was carried by more than two to one. Nine Heads of Colleges and twenty-three Doctors supported it.

When the Master of Trinity learned that he was no longer Richard Bentley, D.D., M.A., or even B.A., but simply Richard Bentley, he said, "I have rubbed through many a worse business than this." He instantly bestirred himself with his old vigour, petitioning the Crown, appealing to powerful friends, and dealing some hard knocks in the free fight of pamphlets which broke out on the question. For nearly six years, however, he remained under the sentence of degradation. During that period he brought actions of libel against his two principal adversaries, Colbatch, and Conyers Middleton. Colbatch suffered a week's imprisonment and a fine. Middleton was twice prosecuted; the first time, he had to apologise to Bentley, and pay costs; the second time he was fined. During the years 1720–1723 Bentley had altogether six lawsuits in the Court of King's Bench, and gained all of them. The last and most important was against the University, for having taken away his degrees. That act had undoubtedly been illegal. The four Judges all took Bentley's part. On February 7, 1724, the Court gave judgment. The University received peremptory direction to restore Bentley's degrees. That command was obeyed, but with a significant circumstance. On March 25, 1724, the Vice-chancellor was to lay the first stone of the new buildings designed for King's College. In order that Bentley might not participate as a Doctor in the ceremonial, the Grace restoring his degrees was offered to the Senate on March 26.

Thus, after fifteen years of almost incessant strife, the Master of Trinity had prevailed over opposition both in

the College and in the University. He was sixty-two. His fame as a scholar was unrivalled. As a controversialist he had proved himself a match, in different fields, for wits, heretics, and lawyers. At Cambridge, where he was now the virtual leader of the Whig party in the Senate, his influence had become pre-eminent. And as if to show that he had passed through all his troubles without stain, it was in this year, 1724, that the Duke of Newcastle wrote and offered him the Bishopric of Bristol — then rather a poor one. Bentley declined it, frankly observing that the revenues of the see would scarcely enable him to attend Parliament. When he was asked what preferment he would accept — "Such," he answered, "as would not induce me to desire an exchange."

The remainder of this combative life, it might have been thought, would now be peaceful. But the last chapter is the most curious of all. It can be briefly told. Dr. Colbatch, the ablest of Bentley's adversaries in Trinity College, had never resigned the purpose of bringing the Master to justice. It had become the object for which he lived: private wrongs had sunk into his mind; but he believed himself to be fulfilling a public duty. In 1726 he vainly endeavoured to procure intervention by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, on the ground of certain grievances suffered by the Westminster scholars at Trinity College. In 1728 he was more successful. Some Fellows of Trinity joined him in a fresh attempt to obtain a visitation of the College by the Bishop of Ely. There was, in fact, good reason for it. Bentley's rule had become practically absolute, and therefore unconstitutional. While Colbatch's new allies were preparing their measures death nearly saved them the trouble. George II. had visited Cambridge, and had been received in full state at

Trinity College. Bentley, who was subject to severe colds, had caught a chill during the ceremonies of the reception, in the course of which he had been called on to present no fewer than fifty-eight Doctors of Divinity. He was seized with fever. For some days his life was in most imminent danger. But he rallied, and, after taking the waters at Bath, recovered. Five Counsel having expressed an opinion that the Bishop of Ely was General Visitor of the College, Dr. Greene, who now held that see, cited Bentley to appear before him. Bentley did so; but presently obtained a rule from the Court of King's Bench, staying the Bishop's proceedings on the ground that the articles of accusation included matters not cognizable by the Bishop. The question of the Bishop's jurisdiction was next brought before the King's Bench. The Court decided that the Bishop was in this cause Visitor — but again stayed his proceedings — this time on the ground of a technical informality. The prosecutors now appealed to the House of Lords. The House of Lords reversed the decision of the King's Bench, and empowered the Bishop to try Bentley on twenty of the sixty-four counts which had been preferred.

After the lapse of nearly twenty years, Bentley was once more arraigned at Ely House. This second trial began on June 13, 1733. On April 27, 1734, the Bishop gave judgment. Bentley was found guilty of dilapidating the College goods and violating the College Statutes. He was sentenced to be deprived of the Mastership.

At last the long chase was over and the prey had been run to earth. No shifts or doublings could save him now. It only remained to execute the sentence. The Bishop sent down to Cambridge three copies of his judgment. One was for Bentley. Another was to be posted on the

gates of Trinity College. A third was to be placed in the hands of the Vice-master.

The fortieth Statute of Elizabeth, on which the judgment rested, prescribes that the Master, if convicted by the Visitor, shall be deprived *by the agency of the Vice-master*. It has been thought—and Monk adopts the view—that the word *Vice-master* here is a mere clerical error for *Visitor*. The tenor of the Statute itself first led me to doubt this plausible theory. For it begins by saying that a peccant Master shall first be *admonished* by the Vice-master and Seniors: *per Vice Magistrum*, etc., . . . *admoneatur*. If obdurate, he is then to be examined by the Visitor; and, if convicted, *per eundem Vice-magistrum Officio Magistri privetur*. This seems to mean: "let him be *deprived* by the same Vice-master who had first *admonished* him." The Statute intended to provide for the *execution* of the sentence by the College itself, without the scandal of any external intervention beyond the purely *judicial* interposition of the Visitor. I have since learned that the late Francis Martin, formerly Vice-master, discussed this point in a short paper (Nov. 12, 1857), which Dr. Luard's kindness has enabled me to see. Dr. Monk had seen a copy of the Statutes in which *Visitatorem* was written as a correction over *Vice-magistrum*. He believed this copy to be the original one; and when in 1846 Martin showed him the really authentic copy—with Elizabeth's signature and the Great Seal—in the Muniment-room, he at once said, "I never saw that book." There the words stand clearly *Vice-magrm*, as in the Statutes of Philip and Mary; there is no correction, superscript or marginal; and the vellum shows that there has been no erasure. The Vice-master, who takes the chief part in admitting the Master (Stat. Cap. 2), is the natural minister of depriva-

tion. Bentley's Counsel advised the Vice-master, Dr. Hacket, to refrain from acting until he had taken legal opinion. Meanwhile Bentley continued to act as Master, to the indignation of his adversaries, and the astonishment of the world. An examination for College scholarships was going on just then. On such occasions in former years Bentley had often set the candidates to write on some theme suggestive of his own position. Thus, at the height of his monarchy, he gave them, from Virgil, "No one of this number shall go away without a gift from me;" and once, at a pinch in his wars, from Homer, "Despoil others, but keep hands off Hector." This time he had a very apposite text for the young composers, from Terence: "This is your plea now—that I have been turned out: look you, there are ups and downs in all things." Dr. Hacket, however, had no mind to stand long in the breach; and on May 17, 1734, he resigned the Vice-mastership. He was succeeded by Dr. Richard Walker, a friend on whom Bentley could rely. During the next four years, every resource which ingenuity could suggest was employed to force Dr. Walker into executing the sentence of deprivation on Bentley. A petition was presented by Colbatch's party to the House of Lords, which the peers, after a debate, permitted to be withdrawn. Dr. Walker now effected a compromise between Bentley and some of the hostile Fellows. But Colbatch persevered. Three different motions were made in the Court of King's Bench; first, for a writ to compel Dr. Walker to act; next, for a writ to compel the Bishop of Ely to compel Dr. Walker to act; then, for a writ to compel the Bishop to do his own duty as General Visitor. All in vain. On April 22, 1738, the Court rejected the last of these applications.

That day marks the end of the strife begun in February, 1710: it had thus lasted a year longer than the Peloponnesian War. It has two main chapters. The first is the fourteen years' struggle from 1710 to 1724, in which Miller was the leader down to his withdrawal in 1719. The years 1725–1727 were a pause. Then the ten years' struggle, from 1728 to 1738, was organised and maintained by Colbatch. Meanwhile many of the persons concerned were advanced in age. Three weeks after the King's Bench had refused the third mandamus, Bishop Greene died at the age of eighty. Dr. Colbatch was seventy-five. Bentley himself was seventy-seven. If he had wanted another classical theme for the candidates in the scholarship examination, he might have given them —"One man by his delay hath restored our fortunes." He was under sentence of deprivation, but only one person could statutably deprive him; that person declined to move; and no one could make him move. Bentley therefore remained master of the field—and of the College.

We remember the incorrigible old gentleman in the play, whose habit of litigation was so strong that, when precluded from further attendance on the public law-courts, he got up a little law-court at home, and prosecuted his dog. Bentley's occupation with the King's Bench ceased in April, 1738. In July he proceeded against Dr. Colbatch at Cambridge in the Consistorial Court of the Bishop of Ely, for the recovery of certain payments called "proxies," alleged to be due from Colbatch, as Rector of Orwell, to Bentley, as Archdeacon of the diocese. The process lasted eighteen months, at the end of which Dr. Colbatch had to pay six years' arrears and costs.

Looking back on Bentley's long war with the Fellows,

one asks, Who was most to blame? De Quincey approves Dr. Parr's opinion—expressed long after Bentley's death—that the College was wrong, and Bentley right. But De Quincey goes further. Even granting that Bentley was wrong, De Quincey says, we ought to vote him right, "for by this means the current of one's sympathy with an illustrious man is cleared of ugly obstructions." It is good to be in sympathy with an illustrious man, but it is better still to be just. The merits of the controversy between Bentley and the Fellows have two aspects, legal and moral. The legal question is simple. Had Bentley, as Master, brought himself within the meaning of the fortieth Elizabethan Statute, and deserved the penalty of deprivation? Certainly he had. It was so found on two distinct occasions, twenty years apart, after a prolonged investigation by lawyers. Morally, the first question is: Was Bentley obliged to break the Statutes in order to keep some higher law? He certainly was not. It cannot be shown that the Statutes were in conflict with any project which he entertained for the good of the College; and, if they had been so, the proper course for him was not to violate them, but to move constitutionally for their alteration. A further moral question concerns the nature of his personal conduct towards the Fellows. This conduct might conceivably have been so disinterested and considerate as to give him some equitable claim on their forbearance, though they might feel bound to resist the course which he pursued. His conduct was, in fact, of an opposite character. On a broad view of the whole matter, from 1710 to 1738, the result is this. Legally, the College had been right, and Bentley wrong. Morally, there had been faults on both parts; but it was Bentley's intolerable behaviour which first, and after long forbearance,

forced the Fellows into an active defence of the common interests. The words "Farewell peace to Trinity College" were pronounced by Bentley. It is not a relevant plea that his academic ideal was higher than that of the men whose rights he attacked.

The College necessarily suffered for a time from these long years of domestic strife which had become a public scandal. Almost any other society, perhaps, would have been permanently injured. But Trinity College had the strength of unique traditions, deeply rooted in the history of the country; and the excellent spirit shown by its best men, in the time which immediately followed Bentley's, soon dispelled the cloud. When the grave had closed over those feuds, the good which Bentley had done lived in better tests of merit, and in the traditional association of the College with the encouragement of rising sciences.

Now we must turn to an altogether different side which, throughout these stormy years, is presented by the activity of this extraordinary man.

CHAPTER VIII.

LITERARY WORK AFTER 1700.—HORACE.

From the beginning of 1700 to the summer of 1702 Bentley was constantly occupied with University or College affairs. On August 2, 1702, he writes to Graevius at Utrecht: "You must know that for the last two years I have hardly had two days free for literature." This was perhaps the longest decisive interruption of literary work in his whole life. Nearly all his subsequent writings were finished in haste, and many of them were so timed as to appear at moments when he had a special reason for wishing to enlist sympathy. But his studies, as distinguished from his acts of composition, appear to have been seldom broken off for more than short spaces, even when he was most harassed by external troubles. His wonderful nerve and will enabled him to concentrate his spare hours on his own reading, at times when other men would have been able to think of nothing but threatened ruin.

His early years at Trinity College offer several instances of his generous readiness to help and encourage other scholars. One of these was Ludolph Küster, a young Westphalian then living at Cambridge, whom Bentley assisted with an edition of the Greek lexicographer Suidas, and afterwards with an edition of Aristophanes. Another was a young Dutchman, destined to celebrity—Tiberius

Hemsterhuys. Bentley had sent him a kindly criticism on an edition of Julius Pollux, pointing out certain defects of metrical knowledge. The effect on Hemsterhuys has been described by his famous pupil, David Ruhnken. At first he was plunged in despair: then he roused himself to intense effort. To his dying day he revered Bentley, and would hear nothing against him. The story recalls that of F. Jacobs, the editor of the Greek Anthology, who was spurred into closer study of metre by the censures of Godfrey Hermann. In 1709 John Davies, Fellow of Queens' College, Cambridge, published an edition of Cicero's "Tusculan Disputations," with an appendix of critical notes by Bentley. The notes were disparaged in a review called the *Bibliothèque Choisie* by the Swiss John Le Clerc, then leader of the Arminians in Holland; a versatile but shallow man, who had touched the surface of philosophy, and was now ambitious of figuring on the surface of classical literature. Some months later Le Clerc edited the fragments of the Greek comic poets, Menander and Philemón. Nettled by the review, Bentley wrote his own emendations on 323 of these fragments. He restored them metrically, showing that Le Clerc had mixed them with words from the prose texts in which they occur, and had then cut the compound into lengths of twelve syllables, regardless of scansion. Bentley's manuscript, under the name of "Phileleutherus Lipsiensis," was transmitted to a scholar at Utrecht, Peter Burmann, who willingly used the permission to publish it. The first edition was sold in three weeks. Le Clerc learned who "Phileleutherus" was, and wrote a violent letter to Bentley. Bentley made a caustic reply. He has been charged with denying the authorship. He does not do so; but he shows a mischievous pleasure in puzzling his furious correspondent.

As early as 1702 Bentley had been meditating an edition of Horace. I translate from his Latin preface his own account of the motive:

"When, a few years ago [*i. e.*, in 1700], I was promoted to a station in which official duties and harassing cares, daily surging about me, had distracted me from all deeper studies, I resolved—in order that I might not wholly forget the Muses and my old loves—to set about editing some writer of the pleasanter sort, comparatively light in style and matter, such as would make in me, rather than claim from me, a calm and untroubled mind; a work that could be done bit by bit at odd hours, and would brook a thousand interruptions without serious loss. My choice was HORACE; not because I deemed that I could restore and correct more things in him than in almost any other Latin or Greek author; but because he, above all the ancients—thanks to his merit, or to a peculiar genius and gift for pleasing—was familiar to men's hands and hearts. The form and scope of my work I defined and limited thus;—that I should touch only those things which concern the soundness and purity of the *text;* but should wholly pass by the mass of those things which relate to history and ancient manners—that vast domain and laboratory of *comment.*"

Bentley began printing his Horace, with his own emendations embodied in the text and the common readings given at the foot of the page, before he had written the critical notes which were to justify these changes. In August, 1706, he says: "I have printed three new sheets in it this last fortnight, and I hope shall go on to finish by next spring." Sinister auguries were already heard in certain quarters. "I do not wonder," he writes to a friend, "that some . . . do talk so wildly about my Hor-

ace. . . . I am assured none of them will write against my notes. They have had enough of me, and will hereafter let me alone." The rumour of Bentley's new labours inspired his old enemy, Dr. King, with a satire called "Horace in Trinity College." Horace is supposed to have fulfilled his dream of visiting our remote island (*visam Britannos*), but to have lost the airy form in which he proposed to make that excursion—under the influence of solid cheer supplied to him from the butteries of Trinity College.

Instead of appearing in the spring of 1707, Bentley's Horace was not ready till December 8, 1711. The summer months were the only part of the year in which he could do much; and from his preface it would appear that between 1702 and 1711 there had been four summers in which he made no progress. The notes on the text fill 448 quarto pages of small print, in double column, at the end of the volume. It is characteristic of Bentley that a great part of these notes were written in about five months—July to November, 1711. He says himself that his work was thrown off "in the first impetus and glow" of his thoughts, and sent to the press almost before the ink was dry. It was rather his way to brag of this; but it must be literally true, to a great extent, of the notes. He had his own reasons for haste, and worked at high pressure. The Horace was to be an offering to Harley, who just then was the umpire of Bentley's fortunes. In the dedication to the Tory Premier, Bentley openly announces himself as a converted Whig, by saying that Mæcenas did not like Horace the less for having borne arms with Brutus and Cassius; not a very happy allusion, when one remembers that the poet ran away at Philippi.

Bentley's Horace is a monumental proof of his in-

genuity, learning, and argumentative skill. The notes abound in hints on grammar and metre which have a general value. In reading them one feels, too, the "impetus and glow" of which their author speaks: one feels almost everywhere the powerful genius of the man. But while the Horace shows Bentley's critical method on a large scale and in a most striking form, it illustrates his defects as conspicuously as his strength. Bentley had first displayed his skill by restoring deeply corrupted passages of Greek writers, especially poets. Heroic remedies were required there. With his wide reading, unrivalled metrical knowledge, and keen insight, Bentley had been able to make some restorations which seemed little short of miraculous. Hopeless nonsense, under his touch, became lucid and coherent. The applause which followed these efforts exalted his confidence in his own gift of divination. His mind was confirmed in a bent which kept him constantly on the lookout for possible improvements of word or phrase in everything that he read.

Now, Horace was one of the most perilous subjects that Bentley could have chosen. Not so much because the text of Horace, as we have it, is particularly pure. There are many places in which corruption is certain, and conjecture is the only resource. But, owing to his peculiar cast of mind and style, Horace is one of the very last authors whose text should be touched without absolute necessity. In the Satires and Epistles his language is coloured by two main influences, subtly interfused, each of which is very difficult, often impossible, for a modern reader to seize. One is the colloquial idiom of Roman society. The other is literary association, derived from sources, old Italian or Greek, which in many cases are lost. In the Odes, the second of these two influences is

naturally predominant; and in them the danger of tampering is more obvious, though perhaps not really greater, than in the Satires or Epistles. Now, Bentley's tendency was to try Horace by the tests of clear syntax, strict logic, and normal usage. He was bent on making Horace "sound" in a sense less fine, but even more rigorous, than that in which Pope is "correct."

Thus, in the "Art of Poetry," Horace is speaking of a critic: "If you told him, *after two or three vain attempts*, that you could not do better, he would bid you erase your work, and put your *ill-turned verses on the anvil* again" (*et male tornatos incudi reddere versus*). "Ill-turned"—"anvil!" said Bentley: "what has a lathe to do with an anvil?" And so, for *male tornatos*, he writes *male ter natos*, "thrice shaped amiss." Horace elsewhere speaks of verses as *incultis . . . et male natis*. To Bentley's reading, however, it may be objected that the order of words required by the sense is *ter male natos:* for *male ter natos* ought to mean, either "unhappily thrice-born"—like the soul of a Pythagorean, unfortunate in two migrations; or "barely thrice-born"—as if, in some process which required three refinements, the third was scarcely completed. And then, if we are not satisfied with the simplest account of *tornatos*—viz., that Horace lapsed into a mixture of common metaphors—it admits of a strict defence. The verses have been put on the lathe, but have not been successfully rounded and polished. Then, says Horace's critic, they must go back to the *anvil*, and be forged anew, passing again through that first process by which the rough material is brought into shape for the lathe. Yet Bentley was so sure of his *ter natos* that persons who doubted it seemed no better than "moles."

Another instance will illustrate the danger of altering

touches in Horace which may have been suggested by some lost literary source. In the Odes (III. iv. 45) Horace speaks of Jupiter as ruling "*cities* and troubled realms, and gods, and *the multitudes of men*" (urbes . . . mortalisque turbas). "Tell me, pray," cries Bentley, "what is the sense of 'cities' and 'the multitudes of men?' This is silly—mere tautology." And so he changes *urbes*, "cities," into *umbras*, "the shades" of the departed. Now, as Munro has pointed out, Horace may have had in mind a passage in the *Epicharmus*, a philosophical poem by Ennius, of which a few lines remain: where it is said of Jupiter, "*mortalis atque urbes* beluasque omnes iuvat." One or two of Bentley's corrections are not only admirable but almost certain (as *musto* Falerno for *misto* in the Satires II. iv. 19). A few more have reason wholly on their side, and yet are not intrinsically probable. Thus in the Epistles (I. vii. 29) we have the fable of the fox, who, when lean, crept through a chink into a granary, and there grew too fat to get out again. "To the rescue," exclaims Bentley, "ye sportsmen, rustics, and naturalists! A fox eating grain!" And so Bentley changes the fox into a field-mouse (*volpecula* into *nitedula*). But the old fabulist from whom Horace got the story, meaning to show how cunning greed may overreach itself, had chosen the animal which is the type of cunning, without thinking of the points on which Bentley dwells, the structure of its teeth and its digestive organs.

Bentley has made altogether between 700 and 800 changes in the text of Horace: in his preface, he recalls 19 of these, but adds a new one (*rectis* oculis for *siccis* in Odes I. iii. 18: which convinced Porson). His paramount guide, he declares, has been his own faculty of divination. To this, he says, he has owed more corrections, and cor-

rections of greater certainty, than to the manuscripts—in using which, however, where he does use them, he nearly always shows the greatest tact. Now, criticism of a text has only one proper object—to exhibit what the author wrote. It is a different thing to show what he might have written. Bentley's passion for the exercise of his divining faculty hindered him from keeping this simple fact clearly before his mind. In the "Art of Poetry" (60) Horace has: "*Ut silvae foliis pronos mutantur in annos:*" "As woods suffer change of leaves with each declining year." Nothing could be less open to suspicion—*foliis* being an ordinary ablative of the part affected (like *capti auribus et oculis* for "deaf and blind"). Yet Bentley must needs change this good line into one which is bad both in style and in metre: "*Ut silvis folia privos mutantur in annos,*" "As woods have their leaves changed with each year;" and this he prints in his text. Speaking of Bentley's readings in the mass, one may say that Horace would probably have liked two or three of them—would have allowed a very few more as not much better or worse than his own—and would have rejected the immense majority with a smile or a shudder.

On the other hand, there is a larger sense in which Bentley's Horace is a model of conservative prudence. Recent German criticism has inclined to the view that Horace's works are interpolated not only with spurious passages but with whole spurious poems. Thus Mr. O. F. Gruppe actually rejects the whole of the beautiful ode, *Tyrrhena Regum Progenies* (III. xxix.). Another critic, Mr. Hofmann-Peerlkamp, regrets that Bentley's haste blinded him to many interpolations. Haupt, Meineke, Ritschl have favoured the same tendency. The prevailing view of English scholarship is that the solitary interpolation in our

Horace consists of the eight lines ("*Lucili quam sis mendosus*," &c.) prefixed to Satire I. 10, and probably as old, or nearly so, as the poem itself. Bentley's suspicions are confined to a few single lines here and there. But there is only one line in all Horace which he positively condemns. It is mainly a point of literary criticism, and is a curious example of his method. I give it in Latin and English (Odes IV. viii. 15):

"Non celeres fugae
Reiectaeque retrorsum Hannibalis minae,
Non incendia Carthaginis impiae
Eius qui domita nomen ab Africa
Lucratus rediit clarius indicant
Laudes, quam Calabrae Pierides."

"Not the swift flight
And menace backward hurled of Hannibal,
Not impious Carthage sinking into fire
So well gives forth his praises, who returned
With title won from conquered Africa,
As ye, Calabria's Muses."

Now, says Bentley, the Scipio (Africanus maior) who defeated Hannibal in the Second Punic War is a different person from the Scipio (Africanus minor) who burned Carthage more than half a century later. How can it be said that the defeat of Hannibal glorifies the destroyer of Carthage? And so Bentley would leave out the burning of Carthage, and make the whole passage refer to the conqueror of Hannibal. The answer seems plain. Horace means: "The glory of the Scipios never reached a higher pinnacle than that on which it was placed by the Calabrian poet Ennius, when he described the defeat of Hannibal by the elder Africanus; though that achievement was crowned by the younger Africanus, when he finally

destroyed Carthage." The "praises" of the younger Africanus are not exclusively his personal exploits, but the glories, both ancestral and personal, of his name. Then Bentley objects to the caesura in "*Non incendia Carthaginis impiae.*" But what of the undoubtedly genuine verse, "*Dum flagrantia de|torquet ad oscula*" (Odes II. xii. 25)? "The preposition *de*," he replies, "is, as it were, separated from the verb *torquet*—not being a native part of that word." This might seem a bold plea; but it shows his knowledge. In old Latin inscriptions the preposition and the rest of the word are often disjoined—for instance, IN VICTO could stand for INVICTO: and Bentley's principle would apply to Horace's "*Arcanique fides prodiga per|lucidior vitro*" (Odes I. xviii. 16). If, however, *Carthaginis* has not the privilege of a compound, it may have that of a proper name. The presence of a proper name has been urged in excuse of "*Mentemque lymphat|am Mareotico*" (Od. I. xxxvii. 14), "*Spectandus in certa|mine Martio*" (Od. IV. xiv. 17). Bentley does not notice this ground of defence. Finally, he rejects "Non incendia Carthaginis impiae" as a verse of "manifestly monkish spirit and colour."

Bentley was the first modern editor who followed the best ancient authorities in calling the Odes *Carmina*, and not *Odae*, the Satires *Sermones*, and not *Satirae*. In his preface he endeavours to settle the chronological order of Horace's writings. Previous Horatian critics—as Faber, Dacier, Masson — had aimed at dating separate poems. Bentley maintains — rightly, no doubt — that the poems were originally *published*, as we have them, in whole books. He further assumes—with much less probability—that Horace *composed* in only one style at a time, first writing satires; then iambics (the "Epodes"); then the

Odes—of which book IV. and the Carmen Saeculare came between the two books of Epistles. Bentley's method is too rigid. He argues from the internal evidence too much as if a poet's works were the successive numbers of a newspaper. Yet here, too—though some of his particular views are arbitrary or wrong—he laid down the main lines of a true scheme.

Bentley's Horace immediately brought out half a dozen squibs—none of them good—and one or two more serious attacks. John Ker, a school-master, assailed Bentley's Latinity in four Letters (1713); and some years later the same ground was taken by Richard Johnson—who had been a contemporary of Bentley's at Cambridge, and was now master of Nottingham School—in his "*Aristarchus Anti-Bentleianus*" (1717). The fact is that Bentley wrote Latin as he wrote English—with racy vigour, and with a wealth of trenchant phrases; but he was not minutely Ciceronian. The two critics were able to pick some holes. One of Bentley's slips was amusing: he promises the readers of his Horace that they will find purity of idiom in his Latin notes—and calls it *sermonis puritatem*—which happens *not* to be pure Latin. In 1721 a rival Horace was published by Alexander Cunningham, a Scottish scholar of great learning and industry. His emendations are sometimes execrable, but often most ingenious. His work is marred, however, by a mean spite against Bentley, whom he constantly tries to represent as a plagiarist or a blunderer—and who ignored him.

The first edition of Bentley's Horace (1711) went off rapidly, and a second was required in 1712. This was published by the eminent firm of Wetstein at Amsterdam. Paper and printing were cheaper there — an important point when the book was to reach all scholars. Thomas

Bentley, the nephew, brought out a smaller edition of the work in 1713, dedicating it—with logical propriety—to Harley's *son*. The line in the *Dunciad* (II. 205)—"Bentley his mouth with classic flatt'ry opes"—is fixed by Warburton on Thomas Bentley, "a small critic, who aped his uncle in a little Horace." Among other compliments, Bentley received one or two which he could scarcely have anticipated. Le Clerc, whom he had just been lashing so unmercifully, wrote a review in the *Bibliothèque Choisie* which was at once generous and judicious. Bentley also received a graceful note from Atterbury, now Dean of Christ Church. "I am indebted to you, Sir," says the Dean, "for the great pleasure and instruction I have received from that excellent performance; though at y^e^ same time I cannot but own to you the uneasyness I felt when I found how many things in Horace there were, which, after thirty years' acquaintance with him, I did not understand." There is much of Horace in that.

CHAPTER IX.

OTHER CLASSICAL STUDIES.—TERENCE.—MANILIUS.—HOMER.

One of Bentley's few intimate friends in the second half of his life was Dr. Richard Mead, an eminent physician, and in other ways also a remarkable man. After graduating at the University of Padua—which, as Cambridge men will remember, had been the second *alma mater* of Dr. John Caius—Dr. Mead began practice at Stepney in 1696. He rose rapidly to the front rank of his profession, in which he stood from about 1720 to his death in 1754. Dibdin describes him with quaint enthusiasm. "His house was the general receptacle of men of genius and talent, and of everything beautiful, precious, or rare. His curiosities, whether books, or coins, or pictures, were laid open to the public; and the enterprising student and experienced antiquary alike found amusement and a courteous reception. He was known to all foreigners of intellectual distinction, and corresponded both with the artisan and the potentate."

In 1721—Bentley being in London at the time—Mead gave him a copy of a Greek inscription just published by the accomplished antiquary, Edmund Chishull, who had been chaplain to the English Factory at Smyrna. A marble slab, about 8 feet 7 inches high and 18 inches broad,

had been found in the Troad. It is now in the British Museum. This slab had supported the bust of a person who had presented some pieces of plate to the citizens of Sigeum; on the upper part, an inscription in Ionic Greek records the gifts; lower down, nearly the same words are repeated in Attic Greek, with the addition—"Æsopus and his brothers made me." Bentley dashed off a letter to Mead; there had been no bust at all, he said; the two inscriptions on the slab were merely copied from two of the pieces of plate; the artists named were the silversmiths. He was mistaken. The true solution is clearly that which has since been given by Kirchhoff. The Ionic inscription was first carved by order of the donor, a native of the Ionic Proconnesus; the lower inscription was added at Sigeum, where settlers had introduced the Attic dialect, on its being found that the upper inscription could not easily be read from beneath; Æsopus and his brothers were the stone-cutters. Yet Bentley's letter incidentally throws a flash of light on a point not belonging to its main subject. A colossal statue of Apollo had been dedicated in Delos by the islanders of Naxos. On the base are these words: ΟϜΥΤΟΛΙΘΟΕΜΙΑΝΔΡΙΑΣΚΑΙΤΟΣΦΕΛΑΣ. Bentley read this (τ)οϜυτοῦ [=ταὐτοῦ] λίθου εἴμ', ἀνδριὰς καὶ τὸ σφέλας, an iambic trimeter (with hiatus): "I am of the same stone, statue and pedestal."

After this instance of rashness, it is right to record a striking success. In 1728 Chishull published an inscription from copies made by the travellers Spon and Wheeler. Bentley, in a private letter, suggested some corrections; but Chishull, who saw the criticisms without knowing the author, demurred to some of them, thinking that the copies could not have been so inexact. Some years later the stone itself was brought to England. It then appeared

that the copies had been wrong, and that Bentley's conjectural reading agreed in every particular with the marble itself. That marble is in the British Museum: it was found at the ancient Chalcedon on the Bosporus, opposite Constantinople, and had supported a statue of *Zeus Ourios*, *i. e.*, "Zeus the giver of fair winds." He had a famous temple in that neighbourhood, at the mouth of the Black Sea, where voyagers through the straits were wont to make their vows. The inscription (3797 in the *Corpus*) consists of four elegiac couplets, of which the style would justify us in supposing that they were at least as old as the age of Alexander: I translate them:

> "Zeus, the sure guide who sends the favouring gale,
> Claims a last vow before ye spread the sail:
> If to the Azure Rocks your course ye urge,
> Where in the strait Poseidon lifts the surge,
> Or through the broad Ægean seek your home,
> Here lay your gift—and speed across the foam.
> Behold the god, whose wafting breath divine
> All mortals welcome: Philon raised the sign."

It was shortly before his death in 1742 that this proof of his acuteness was given to the world (by John Taylor), along with another. A Persian manuscript bore the date "*Yonane* (Ionian) 1504:" Bentley showed that this was reckoned from the foundation of the dynasty of Seleucidæ —"Ionian" being the general Oriental name for "Hellene"—and meant the year of 1193 of our era.

In 1724 an edition of Terence was published by Dr. Francis Hare. Bentley had long meditated such a work. He was never a jealous man. But he had a good deal of the feeling expressed by the verse, "Shame to be mute and let barbarians speak." He put forth all his powers. At the beginning of 1726—that is, some eighteen months

after the appearance of Hare's Terence—Bentley's came out. And it was not Terence only. Hare had promised the Fables of Phædrus, and Bentley forestalled him by giving these in the same volume; also the "Sentences" (273 lines) of the so-called Publius Syrus.

The Terence is one of Bentley's titles to fame. Any attempt to criticise such an author's text demands a knowledge of his metres. Bentley was the first modern who threw any clear light on the metrical system of the Latin dramatists. Here, as in other cases, it is essential to remember the point at which he took up the work. Little or nothing of scientific value had been done before him. The prevalent view had been based on that of Priscian, who recognised in Terence only two metres, the iambic and the trochaic—the metre of which the basis is $\smile -$, and that of which it is $- \smile$. Every verse was to be forced into one or other of these moulds, by assuming all manner of "licences" on the part of the poet. Nay, Priscian says that in his time some persons denied that there were any metres in Terence at all! ("*Quosdam vel abnegare esse in Terentii comoediis metra.*") In the preface to an edition of Terence which appeared almost simultaneously with Bentley's, the Dutch editor, Westerhof, alludes ironically to a hint in Bentley's Horace (Sat. II. v. 79) that it was possible to restore the Terentian metres; a sneer which it was Westerhof's fate to expiate by compiling the index for Bentley's second edition when it was published at Amsterdam in 1727. The scholars of the sixteenth century who had treated the subject—Glareanus, Erasmus, Faernus—had followed the "licence" theory. Bentley's object was to reclaim as much as possible from this supposed realm of "licence," and enlarge the domain of law. He points out, first, the variety of Terence's metres, and

illustrates each by an English verse. He then defines certain metrical differences between Roman Comedy, as in Terence, and Roman epic poetry, as in Virgil. The characteristic of Bentley's views on Terentian metre consisted in taking account of accent ("prosody" in the proper sense), and not solely of quantity. To judge from some of Bentley's emendations in poetry, his ear for sound was not very fine; but his ear for rhythm was exact. Guided by this, he could see that the influence of accent in Roman Comedy sometimes overruled the epic and lyric canons of quantitative metre. In one case, however, his attention to accent led him into an erroneous refinement. In Latin, he says, no word of two or more syllables is accented on the last syllable: thus it is *vírum*, not *virúm*. Comic poets, he urges, writing for popular audiences, had to guard as much as possible against laying a metrical stress on these final syllables which could not support an accent. In the iambic trimeter they could not observe this rule everywhere. But Terence, said Bentley, always observes it in the third foot. As an example, I may take this verse:

"Ultro ád | me ven‖it ún|icam ‖ gnatám | suam:"

where the rule, though broken in the 5th foot, is kept in the 3rd. But Bentley seems not to have noticed that this is a result of metre, not of accent: it is due to the caesura.

Bentley corrected the text of Terence in about a thousand places ("mille, opinor, locis," he says)—chiefly on metrical grounds. Yet in every scene of every play, according to Ritschl, he left serious blemishes. That only shows what was the state of the field in which Bentley broke new ground. His work must not be judged as if

he propounded a complete metrical doctrine. Rather he threw out a series of original remarks, right in some points, wrong in others, pregnant in all. G. Hermann and Ritschl necessarily speak of Bentley's labours on Terence with mingled praise and censure; both, however, do full justice to the true instinct with which he led the attack on the problem. Modern studies in Latin metre and pronunciation have advanced the questions treated by Bentley to a new stage; but his merit remains. He was the pioneer of metrical knowledge in its application to the Latin drama.

A word of mention is due to the very curious Latin speech which Bentley has printed in his Terence after the sketch of the metres. It was delivered by him on July 6, 1725, when, as Regius Professor of Divinity, he had occasion to present seven incepting doctors in that faculty. He interprets the old symbols of the doctoral degree—the cap—the book—the gold ring—the chair "believe those who have tried it—no bench is so hard") —and congratulates the University on the beneficence of George I. It has been wondered why Bentley inserted this speech in his Terence. Surely the reason is evident. He had recently been restored to those degrees which had been taken from him by the Cambridge Senate in 1718. He seizes this opportunity of intimating to the world that he is once more in full exercise of his functions as Regius Professor of Divinity.

It was in his seventy-seventh year (1739) that Bentley fulfilled a project of his youth by publishing an edition of Manilius. At the age of twenty-nine (1691) he had been actively collecting materials, and had even made some progress with the text. In 1727 we find that this work, so long laid aside, stood first on the list of prom-

ises to be redeemed: and in 1736 it was ready for press. A proposal for publishing it was made to Bentley by a London "Society for the Encouragement of Learning," which aimed at protecting authors from booksellers. Bentley declined. The Manilius was printed in 1739 by Henry Woodfall. It is a beautiful quarto; the frontispiece is Vertue's engraving of Thornhill's portrait of Bentley, *aetat.* 48 (1710); a good engraving, though a conventional benignity tames and spoils that peculiar expression which is so striking in the picture at Trinity College.

Manilius is the author of an epic poem in five books, called *Astronomica:* but popular astronomy is subordinate, in his treatment, to astrology. Strangely enough, the poet's age was so open a question with the scholars of the seventeenth century that Gevärts actually identified him with Theodorus Mallius, consul in 399 A.D., whom Claudian panegyrises. The preface to Bentley's edition, written by his nephew Richard, rightly assigns Manilius to the age of Augustus, though without giving the internal proofs. These are plain. Book I. was finished after the defeat of Varus (A.D. 9), and Book IV. before the death of Augustus (A.D. 14). F. Jacob, in his edition of the poet (rec. Berlin 1846), understands a verse in Book v. (512) as referring to the restoration by Tiberius of Pompey's Theatre, after it had been burnt down in 22 A.D. But, according to the marble of Ancyra, Augustus also had repaired that theatre at a great cost, and took credit for allowing the name of Pompey to remain in the dedicatory inscription, instead of replacing it by his own. Clearly it is to this that the words of Manilius allude—"*Hinc Pompeia manent veteris monimenta triumphi*"—implying a compliment not only to the munificence, but to the magnanimity, of Augustus. There is no reason, then,

for doubting that the whole poem was composed, or took its present shape, between A.D. 9 and A.D. 14. The poet gives no clue to his own origin, but his style has a strongly Greek tinge.

Scaliger pronounced him "equal in sweetness to Ovid, and superior in majesty;" a verdict which Bentley cites with approval. To most readers it will be scarcely intelligible. Where Manilius deals with the technical parts of astronomy, he displays, indeed, excellent ingenuity; but, in the frequent passages where he imitates Lucretius, the contrast between a poet and a rhetorician is made only more glaring by an archaic diction. The episode of Andromeda and Perseus, in his fifth book, and a passage on human reason in the second, were once greatly admired. To show him at his best, however, I should rather take one of those places where he expresses more simply a feeling of wonder and awe common to every age. "Wherefore see we the stars arise in their seasons, and move, as at a word spoken, on the paths appointed for them? Of whom there is none that hastens, neither is there any that tarries behind. Why are the summer nights beautiful with these that change not, and the nights of winter from of old? These things are not the work of chance, but the order of a God most high."

Bentley's treatment of the text sometimes exhibits all his brilliancy: thus in Book v. 737 the received text had—

> "Sic etiam magno quaedam respondère mundo
> *Haec* Natura facit, quae *caeli* condidit orbem."

This *respondĕre* had even been quoted to show that the poem was post-classical. The MSS. have not *Haec*, but QUAM; not *caeli*, but CAELO; and one good MS. has MUNDO EST. Bentley restores:

> "Sic etiam in magno quaedam RESPUBLICA mundo est,
> Quam Natura facit, quae caelo condidit URBEM."

"So also in the great firmament there is a commonwealth, wrought by Nature, who hath ordered a city in the heavens." *Respondere* arose from a contraction *resp.* And *urbem* is made certain by the next verses, which elaborate the comparison of the starry hierarchy to the various ranks of civic life. But this, Bentley's last published work, shows a tendency from which his earlier criticism was comparatively free. Not content with amending, he rejects very many verses as spurious. The total number is no less than 170 out of 4220 lines which the poem contains. In the vast majority of cases, the ground of rejection is wholly and obviously inadequate. As an example of his rashness here, we may take one passage—which, I venture to think, he has not understood. At the beginning of Book IV. Manilius is reciting the glories of Rome:

> "Quid referam Cannas admotaque moenibus arma?
> Varronemque fuga magnum (quod vivere possit
> Postque tuos, Thrasimene, lacus) Fabiumque morándo?
> *Accepisse iugum victas Carthaginis arces?*"

"Why should I tell of Cannæ, and of (Carthaginian) arms carried to the walls of Rome? Why tell of Varro, great in his flight, . . . and Fabius, in his delay? Or how the conquered towers of Carthage received our yoke?"

Varro's "flight" is his escape from the field of Cannæ, after which he saved the remnant of the Roman army. The words, "*quod vivere possit Postque tuos, Thrasimene, lacus,*" are untranslatable. Bentley seems to have understood: "in that he can live, and that, too, after the battle at Lake Thrasimene;" but, to say no more, *que* forbids this. And then he rejects the whole line, "*Accepisse*—

arces." Why? Because "yokes" are put on peoples, not on "towers!" Now the oldest manuscript (Gemblacensis) has not *vivere*, but VINCERE: the MSS. have not *quod* (a conjecture), but QUAM. They have also MORANTEM (not *morando*), VICTAE (not *victas*). I should read:

> "Quid referam Cannas admotaque moenibus arma?
> Varronemque fugà magnum, Fabiumque morantem?
> Postque tuos, Thrasimene, lacus QUOM VINCERE POSSET,
> Accepisse iugum victae Carthaginis arces?"

"and that—though after the fight by thy waters, Thrasimene, she could hope to conquer—the towers of conquered Carthage received our yoke."

The words "quom vincere posset" allude to the imminent peril of Rome after Hannibal's great victory at Lake Thrasimene, when the fall of the city seemed inevitable if the conqueror should march upon it. (Cp. Liv. XXII. 7 f.)

It remains to speak of another labour which Bentley was not destined to complete, but which, even in its comparatively slight relics, offers points of great interest—his Homer.

The first trace of Homeric criticism by Bentley occurs in a letter which he wrote to his friend Davies, of Queens' College, just after Joshua Barnes had published his edition of the Iliad and Odyssey (1711). Barnes, who was unreasonably offended with Bentley, refers in his preface to a certain "hostile person," a very Zoilus. "If he mean me," says Bentley, "I have but dipped yet into his notes, and yet I find everywhere just occasion of censure." Bentley then shows that Barnes had made an arbitrary change in a line of the Iliad (*αὐτάρ* for *ἀλλά* in XIV. 101), through not seeing that a reading which had stood in all former editions, and which had puzzled the Greek com-

mentator Eustathius, was a mere blunder (*ἀποπτανέουσιν* for *ἀποπαπτανέουσιν*). In 1713 Bentley published his "Remarks" on the "Discourse of Free-thinking" by Anthony Collins. Collins had spoken of the Iliad as "the epitome of all arts and sciences," adding that Homer "designed his poem for eternity, to please and instruct mankind." "Take my word for it," says Bentley, "poor Homer, in those circumstances and early times, had never such aspiring thoughts. He wrote a sequel of songs and rhapsodies, to be sung by himself for small earnings and good cheer, at festivals and other days of merriment; the *Ilias* he made for the men, and the *Odysseïs* for the other sex. These loose songs were not collected together in the form of an epic poem till Pisistratus's time, above [2nd edition: 1st, *about*] 500 years after." There is some ambiguity in the phrase, "a *sequel* of songs and rhapsodies." It seems improbable that Bentley meant, "a *connected* series."

When Bentley wrote this, the origin of the Homeric poems had not yet become a subject of modern controversy. It would be unfair to press his casual utterance as if it were a carefully defined statement. Yet it is interesting to note the general outlines of the belief which satisfied a mind so bold and so acute. He supposes, then, that a poet named Homer lived about 1050 B.C. This poet "wrote" (by which, perhaps, he meant no more than "composed") both the Iliad and the Odyssey. But neither of them was given to the world by Homer as a single epic. Each consisted of many short lays, which Homer recited separately. These lays circulated merely as detached pieces, until they were collected about 550 B.C. into the two epics which we possess.

Seventy-two years later F. A. Wolf published his *Prol-*

egomena. The early epic poetry of Greece, Wolf argues, was transmitted by oral recitation, not by writing. But *our* Iliad and Odyssey could not have been composed without writing. We must conclude, then, that the Homeric poems were originally, in Bentley's phrase, "a sequel of songs and rhapsodies." These "loose songs" were first written down and arranged by the care of Peisistratus. Thus Bentley's sentence contains the germ of the view which Wolf developed. Yet it would be an error to conceive Bentley here as an original sceptic, who threw out the first pregnant hint of a new theory. Bentley's relation to the modern Homeric question is of a different kind. The view which he expresses was directly derived by him from notices in ancient writers; as when Pausanias says that the Homeric poems, before their collection by Peisistratus, had been "scattered, and preserved only by memory, some here, some there." Cicero, Plutarch, Diogenes Laertius, the Platonic *Hipparchus*, Heracleides Ponticus, were other witnesses to whom Bentley could appeal.

He brought forward and approved that old tradition at a time when the original unity of each epic was the received belief. It was not till the latter part of the eighteenth century that the passion for returning from "art" to "nature" prepared a welcome for the doctrine that the Iliad and the Odyssey are parcels of primitive folk-songs. But then we note the off-hand way in which Bentley's statement assumes points which have since vexed Homeric research. He assumes that the Iliad and Odyssey are made up of parts which were *originally* intended for detached recitations: an inference to which the structure of the poems is strongly adverse. He accepts without reserve the tradition regarding Peisistratus. By the ancient saying that the Iliad was written for men and the Odys-

sey for women, Bentley probably understood no more than that the Iliad deals with war, and the Odyssey with the trials of a true wife. There is, indeed, a further sense in which we might say that the Iliad, with its historical spirit, was masculine, and the Odyssey, with its fairy-land wonders and its tender pathos, more akin to *das Ewigweibliche;* but we cannot read that meaning into Bentley's words. He seems to have found no such difference between the characters of the two epics as constrained him to become a "separator." He had not felt, what is now so generally admitted, that the Odyssey bears the marks of a later time than the Iliad. Briefly, then, we cannot properly regard Bentley as a forerunner of the Homeric controversy on its literary or historical side, pre-eminently as his critical gifts would have fitted him to take up the question. He knew the ancient sources on which Wolf afterwards worked, but he had not given his mind to sifting them. Bentley's connexion with Homeric criticism is wholly on the side of the text, and chiefly in regard to metre.

In 1726 Bentley was meditating an edition of Homer, but intended first to finish his labours on the New Testament. In 1732 he definitely committed himself to the Homeric task. At that time the House of Lords had before it the question whether the Bishop of Ely could try Bentley. As the Horace had been dedicated to Harley, so the Homer was to be dedicated to Lord Carteret, a peer who was favourable to the Master of Trinity's cause, and who encouraged the design by granting or procuring the loan of manuscripts. In 1734 we find Bentley at work on Homer. But, though he made some progress, nothing was published. Trinity College possesses the only relics of his Homeric work.

First, there is a copy of H. Estienne's folio *Poetae Graeci*. In this Bentley had read through the Iliad, Odyssey, and Homeric Hymns, writing very brief notes in the margin, which are either his own corrections, or readings from manuscripts or grammarians. In the Hymns the notes become rarer; and it is evident that all were written rapidly. This is the book which Trinity College sent in 1790 to Göttingen, for the use of Heyne, who warmly acknowledges the benefit in the preface to his edition of the Iliad. Secondly, a small quarto manuscript book contains somewhat fuller notes by Bentley on the first six books of the Iliad. These notes occupy 43 pages of the book, ceasing abruptly at verse 54 of Iliad VII. Lastly, there is the manuscript draft of Bentley's notes on the digamma, the substance of which has been published by J. W. Donaldson in his *New Cratylus*.

The distinctive feature of Bentley's Homeric work is the restoration of the digamma. Bentley's discovery was too much in advance of his age to be generally received otherwise than with ridicule or disbelief. Even F. A. Wolf, who yielded to few in his admiration of the English critic, could speak of the digamma as merely an illusion which, in old age, mocked the genius of Bentley (*senile ludibrium ingenii Bentleiani*). At the present day, when the philological fact has so long been seen in a clearer light, it is easy to underrate the originality and the insight which the first perception of it showed.

In reading Homer, Bentley had been struck by such things as these. The words, "*and Atreides the king*," are in Homer, *Atreides te anax*. Now the *e* in *te* would naturally be cut off before the first *a* in *anax*, making *t'anax*. But the poet cannot have meant to cut it off, since that would spoil the metre. Why, then, was he able to avoid

cutting it off? Because, said Bentley, in Homer's time the word *anax* did not begin with a vowel: it was *vanax*. Many old writers mention a letter which had disappeared from the ordinary Greek alphabet. Its sound had been like the Latin v—that is, probably, like our w. Its form was like F: which, to Greek eyes, suggested their letter gamma, Γ, with another gamma on its shoulders: and so they called this F the "double gamma," the *digamma*. Several words are specified by the old grammarians as having once begun with this digamma. Bentley tried the experiment of replacing it before such words where they occurred in Homer. Very often, he found, this explained a gap (or "hiatus"), like that in *Atreides te anax*. He came to the conclusion that, when the Homeric poems were composed, this letter was still used, and that it should *always* be prefixed, in Homer, to those words which once had it.

The first hint of this idea occurs in Bentley's copy (now at Trinity College) of the "Discourse of Free-thinking" by Anthony Collins, which Bentley was reading, and annotating in 1713. On a blank leaf at the end he has written:

"Homer's *δίγαμμα* Aeolicum to be added. *οἶνος*, *Fοῖνος*, vinũ: a Demonstration of this, because *Fοῖνος* has always preceding it a vowel: so *οἰνοποτάζων*."

Bentley's view was noticed by his friend Dr. Samuel Clarke, in the second volume of his Iliad, published posthumously in 1732. In the same year came forth Bentley's edition of *Paradise Lost*, in which he had occasion to quote Homer. There the digamma makes its modern *début* in all the majesty of a capital F—for which printers now use the sign *F*. It was the odd look of such

a word as Fέτος that inspired Pope with the lines in the *Dunciad*. Bentley speaks:

> "Roman and Greek grammarians! know your better,
> Author of something yet more great than letter;
> While tow'ring o'er your alphabet, like Saul,
> Stands our digamma, and o'ertops them all."

Bentley had thrown a true and brilliant light on the text of Homer. But, as was natural then, he pushed his conclusion too far. The Greek *Foinos* is the same as *vinum* and *wine*. Homer, Bentley thought, could no more have said *oinos*, instead of *voinos*, than Romans could say *inum*, or Englishmen *ine*. Accordingly, he set to work to restore this letter all through the Homeric poems. Often it mended the metre, but not seldom it marred it; and then Bentley was for changing the text. A single instance will give some idea of his task. In Iliad I. 202 we have the words *hūbrĭn ĭdḛ* (ὕβριν ἴδῃ), (that thou mayest) "see the insolence." This word *ide* was originally *vide:* its stem *vid* is that of the Latin *video* and our *wit*. Homer, said Bentley, could have written nothing but *vide*. And so, to make the metre right, he reads a different word (ὀρῇς). Now let us see what this involves. This stem *vid* is the parent of several words, very frequent in Homer, for *seeing*, *seeming*, *knowing*, *form*, etc. On Bentley's view, every one of these must always, in Homer, begin with *F*. The number of changes required can easily be estimated by any one who will consult Prendergast's Concordance to the Iliad, Dunbar's to the Odyssey and Homeric Hymns. I do not guarantee the absolute precision of the following numbers, but they are at least approximately correct. I find that about 832 derivatives of the stem *vid* occur in the Iliad, Odyssey, and Hymns. By *F*

I denote those cases in which the metre *requires* the digamma: by N, those in which the metre *excludes* it: by Q, those cases which prove nothing:

	Total.	ϝ	N	Q
Iliad	357	205	81	71
Odyssey. . .	376	220	76	80
Hymns . . .	99	38	34	27
	832	463	191	178

So, for this one root *vid*, Bentley would have been compelled to amend the text of Homer in about 191 places. The number of digammated roots in Homer is between 30 and 40; no other is so prolific as *vid;* but a consistent restoration of the digamma would require change in at least several hundreds of places; and often under conditions which require that the changes, if any, should be extremely bold. Bentley's error consisted in regarding the digamma as a constant element, like any other letter in the radical parts of the words to which it had once been prefixed. It was not this, but rather the ghost of a vanished letter, which, in Homeric metre, fitfully haunts its ancient seats. Nor is it the only such ghost. When Bentley found that, in Homer, the word ὡς, "as," can be treated as if it began with a consonant, he wrote ϝὡς: but the lost initial was not the spirant ϝ: it was ϒ: for ὡς is merely the ablative of ὅ-ς, the Sanskrit *yât.*

Apart from the restoration of the digamma, the relics of Bentley's work on Homer present other attempts at emendation. These are always acute and ingenious; but the instances are rare indeed in which they would now

commend themselves to students. I give a few specimens below, in order that scholars may judge of their general character.* The boldness with which Bentley was disposed to correct Homer may be illustrated by a single example. Priam, the aged king of Troy, is standing beside Helen on the walls, and looking forth on the plain where warriors are moving. He sees Odysseus passing along the ranks of his followers, and asks Helen who that is. "His arms lie on the earth that feedeth many: but he

* I. *From Bentley's MS. notes in the margin of the Homer.*

Odyssey I. 23 (Ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν Αἰθίοπας μετεκίαθε τηλόθ' ἐόντας, | Αἰθίοπας, τοὶ διχθὰ δεδαίαται, ἔσχατοι ἀνδρῶν): "legendum Αἰθίοπες: si vera lectio Il. Z. 396." (θυγάτηρ μεγαλήτορος Ἠετίωνος, | Ἠετίων, ὃς ἔναιεν, κ.τ.λ.) [Lucian speaks of "Attic solecisms"—deliberate imitations, by late writers, of the irregular grammar found in Attic writers: surely this is a gratuitous "Homeric solecism."] 29. (μνήσατο γὰρ κατὰ θυμὸν ἀμύμονος Αἰγίσθοιο.) Bentley conjectures κατὰ νοῦν ἀνοήμονος. 51. θεὰ δ' ἐν δώμασι ναίει "Eust. not. ἐν δώματα ναίει pro vulg. δώμασι, sed lego θεὰ δ' ἐν πότνια ναίει. ἐνναίει absolute, ut ἐνναίουσι Il. I. 154, 296. Sic Od. E. 215 eam compellens Πότνα θεὰ. κοὐ δώματα ἔναιεν sed σπέος. Ibidem." [*i. e.*, Bentley objects to the word δώματα because Calypso lived in a cave. But ἐν δώματα ναίει is unquestionably right.]

II. *From his MS. book of notes on Iliad* I.–VII. 54.

Iliad III. 46 ἦ τοιόσδε ἐών. Amabant, credo, Hiatus; non solum tolerabant. Dedit poeta ἦ τοιοῦτος ἐών. 212. (μύθους καὶ μήδεα πᾶσιν ὔφαινον.) Casaubonus ad Theocritum c. IX. corrigit ἔφαινον. Recte. ἔφαινον μύθους, in concione loquebantur. Sic Il. σ. 295, Νήπιε, μηκέτι ταῦτα νοήματα φαῖν' ἐνὶ δήμῳ. 357. (διὰ μὲν ἀσπίδος ἦλθε φαεινῆς ὄβριμον ἔγχος.) Saepe redit hic versiculus qui si vere ab Homero est, Licentia nescio qua pronuntiabitur Δῖα μὲν, ut Ἄρες, Ἄρες. Non enim tribrachys pro Dactylo hic ponitur ad exprimendam Hastae celeritatem, non magis quam Molossus pes trium longarum ad tarditatem exprimendam. Quid si legat quis, Διαπρὸ μὲν, pede Proceleusmatico, ut "capitibu' nutantes pinus," "Parietibus textum caecis iter."

himself, like a leader of the flock (κτίλος ὥς), moves along the ranks of men; yea, I liken him to a young ram with thick fleece, that passeth through a great flock of white sheep." Bentley, thinking that ὥς must be ϝώς, had to get rid of κτίλος somehow. "Never yet," says Bentley, "have I seen a ram ordering the ranks of men. And what tautology! He moves along, like a ram: and I compare him to a ram!" And so he changes the ram into a word meaning "unarmed" (writing αὐτὰρ ψιλὸς ἐὼν instead of αὐτὸς δὲ κτίλος ὥς), because the arms of Odysseus are said to be lying on the ground.

Bentley had done first-rate work on some authors who would have rewarded him better than Homer—better than Horace or Manilius. It was his habit to enter collations of manuscripts, or his own conjectures, in the margins of his classical books. Some of these books are at Cambridge. Many more are in the British Museum. The *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1807 relates how Kidd found 60 volumes, formerly Bentley's, at the London bookseller Lackington's, to whom they had been sold by Cumberland, and from whom they were at once bought for the Museum by the Trustees. The complete list of the Bentley books in the British Museum comprises (omitting duplicates) 70 works. All, or nearly all, the manuscript notes which enrich these volumes have now been printed somewhere. The notes on Lucan, whom Bentley had intended to edit, were published by Cumberland in 1760. Among the most ingenious emendations are those on Nicander, the Greek physician of Colophon (*circ.* 150 B.C.), whose epic on venomous bites (*Theriaca*) Bentley had annotated at the request of Dr. Mead. But the province of Greek and Roman literature in which these remains most strikingly illustrate Bentley's power is, on the whole, that of the comic drama.

He had sent Küster his remarks on two plays of Aristophanes—the *Plutus* and *Clouds*. All the eleven comedies have his marginal notes in his copy of Froben's edition, now in the British Museum. These notes were first published by G. Burges in the *Classical Journal*, xi.–xiv. For exact scholarship, knowledge, and brilliant felicity, they are wonderfully in advance of anything which had then been done for the poet. Porson is said to have felt the joy of a truly great scholar on finding that his own emendations of Aristophanes had been anticipated, in some seventy instances, by the predecessor whom he so highly revered. Bentley's emendations of Plautus are also very remarkable. They have been published, for the first time, by Mr. E. A. Sonnenschein, in his edition of the *Captivi* (1880), from the Plautus in the British Museum which Bentley used; it is the second edition of Pareus (Frankfurt, 1623). All our twenty comedies have been touched more or less—the number of Bentley's conjectures in each ranging from perhaps 20 to 150 or more.

As in Aristophanes, so in Plautus, Bentley sometimes anticipated the best thoughts of later critics. Such coincidences show how much he was in advance of his age. Those conjectures of Bentley's which were afterwards made independently by such men as Porson or Ritschl were in most cases *certain;* in Bentley's day, however, they were as yet beyond the reach of every one else. Nor must we overlook his work on Lucretius. That library of Isaac Voss which Bentley had vainly sought to secure for Oxford carried with it to Leyden the two most important MSS. of Lucretius—one of the 9th century (Munro's A), another of the 10th (B). Bentley had to work without these. His notes—first completely published in the Glasgow edition of Wakefield (1813)—fill only 22 octavo

pages in the Oxford edition of 1818. But their quality has been recognised by the highest authority. Munro thinks that Bentley, if he had had the Leyden MSS., "might have anticipated what Lachmann did by a century and a half." Another labour also, in another field, descended from Bentley to Lachmann: of that we must now speak.

CHAPTER X.

THE PROPOSED EDITION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Dr. John Mill published in 1707 his edition of the Greek Testament, giving in foot-notes the various readings which he had collected by the labour of thirty years. To understand the impression which this work produced, it is necessary to recall the nature of its predecessors. The Greek text of the New Testament, as then generally read, was ultimately based on two sixteenth century editions; that of Erasmus (Basel, 1516), which had been marked by much carelessness; and that due chiefly to Stunica, in the "Complutensian" Polyglott (so called from *Complūtum*, or Alcalá de Henares) of Cardinal Ximenes, printed in 1514, and probably published in 1522. The folio edition printed by Robert Estienne at Paris in 1550 was founded on the text of Erasmus. The Elzevir editions, of which the first appeared in 1624, gave the text of Estienne as imperfectly revised by the reformer Beza. The second Elzevir edition (1633) declared this to be "the text now received by all." Hence it came to be known as the "Received Text."

The existence of various readings, though a well-known, was hardly a prominent fact. Some had been given in the margin of the folio Estienne; Beza had referred to others; more had been noticed by Walton in the Greek

Testament of his Polyglott (1657), and by Bishop Fell in his small edition (1675). The sources of textual evidence generally had been described and discussed with intelligence and candour by the French scholar Simon (1689–95). But Mill's edition was the first which impressed the public mind by marshalling a great array of variants, roughly estimated at thirty thousand. In his learned *Prolegomena* Mill often expressed opinions and preferences, but without supplying any general clue to the labyrinth exhibited in his critical notes.

The alarm felt in some quarters is strikingly shown by Whitby's censure of Mill's edition (1710), in which he goes so far as to affirm that the "Received Text" can be defended *in all places* where the sense is affected (*in iis omnibus locis* lectionem textus defendi posse), and that even in matters "of lesser moment" it is "most rarely" invalidated. On the other hand, anti-Christian writers did not fail to make capital of a circumstance which they represented as impugning the tradition. Thus Anthony Collins, in his "Discourse of Free-thinking," specially dwelt on Mill's 30,000 variants. In his published reply to Collins (1713), Bentley pointed out that such variants are perfectly compatible with the absence of any essential corruption, while he insisted on the value of critical studies in their application to the Scriptures. Dr. Hare, in publicly thanking Bentley for this reply, urged him to undertake an edition of the New Testament. Undoubtedly there was a wide-spread feeling that some systematic effort should be made towards disengaging a standard text from the variations set forth by Mill.

Three years later (1716), Bentley received a visit from John James Wetstein, a Swiss, related to the Amsterdam publishers who had reprinted Bentley's Horace. Wet-

stein was then on leave of absence from his duties as a chaplain in the Dutch army. For years he had devoted himself with rare ardour to those critical studies of the New Testament which were afterwards embodied in his edition (1751–2). He had recently collated some Greek MSS. in the Library of Paris. "On hearing this," Wetstein writes, Bentley "urged me to publish my collations, with his aid. I pleaded my youth, and the shortness of my leave of absence; I asked him to undertake the work himself, and to use my collections. At length I moved the great critic to entertain a design of which he seemed to have had no thought before—that of editing the New Testament."

It is assumed by Tregelles that Wetstein was mistaken in supposing that Bentley had not previously contemplated an edition. Bentley's *studies* on the New Testament dated, it is true, from his earliest manhood; there are traces of them in his Letter to Mill (1691), no less than in his reply to Collins; he had already collated the Alexandrine MS., and had been using the "Codex Bezae" (his "Cantabrigiensis," belonging to the University Library) since 1715. But it does not follow that Wetstein's statement is not accurate. The fact that Bentley was deeply studying a subject is never sufficient to prove that he meant to write upon it.

Now, at any rate, the plan was definitely formed, and Wetstein returned to Paris, in order to aid it by further collations. In April, 1716, Bentley announced his project in a remarkable letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Wake. Monk hints, though he does not say, that Bentley's object was "to interest the public," in view of imminent law proceedings. I quite agree with Mr. A. A. Ellis, the editor of *Bentleii Critica Sacra*, that in this case

there is no real ground for such a suggestion. Bentley's enthusiasm for the work was sincere, as his correspondence with Wetstein abundantly shows; he did not bring his scheme before the public till 1720; and his object in addressing the Primate was no other than that which he states, viz., to learn whether the project was likely to be encouraged. After sketching his plan, he observes to Dr. Wake that it might be made forever impossible by a fire in the Royal Library of Paris or London. It is startling to read this foreboding, expressed in 1716. Fifteen years later, a fire actually broke out at night in the King's Library, then lodged at Abingdon House, Westminster—when the Cottonian Genesis was seriously damaged. An eye-witness of the scene has described Bentley hurrying out of the burning Library, in his night-gown and his great wig, with the most precious of his charges, the Alexandrine manuscript of the Greek Bible, under his arm.

The Archbishop's reply to Bentley is not extant, but appears to have been favourable. For the next four years (1716–20) Bentley continued to gather materials. Wetstein was not his only ally. David Casley, the Deputy King's Librarian, worked for him in the libraries of Oxford. More important still was the aid of John Walker, a Fellow of Trinity College, who went to Paris in 1719, and passed nearly a year there in collating manuscripts. Walker was most kindly received by the Benedictines of St. Maur, with whom Bentley had already been placed in communication by Wetstein. They provided him with a room in their monastery at St. Germain des Prés, procured collations from the Benedictines of Angers, and personally aided his work in their own library.

Walker returned from Paris in 1720. Bentley now

published his "Proposals for Printing," in which he explains the principles of his edition. He observes that the printed texts of the New Testament, Greek and Latin, are based on comparatively recent manuscripts. His aim has been to recover from older Latin manuscripts the text of the Latin "Vulgate" as formed by Jerome [about 383 A.D.], and to compare this with the oldest Greek manuscripts. Jerome's version was not only strictly literal, but aimed at representing the very order of the Greek words. Where it agrees with our oldest Greek manuscripts, there, Bentley argues, we may recognise the Greek text as received by the Church at the time of the Council of Nice (325 A.D.) "and two centuries after." This test will set aside about four-fifths of those 30,000 various readings which "crowd the pages" of the editions. The text of the New Testament can be fixed "to the smallest nicety." As corroborative evidence, Bentley further proposes to use the Syriac, Coptic, Gothic, and Æthiopic versions (in which Walton's Polyglott would help him), and the citations by the Greek and Latin Fathers, within the first five centuries. Those centuries are to be the limit of the various readings which his foot-notes will exhibit. And he reassures the public mind on a point which might well occasion uneasiness. "The author is very sensible, that in the Sacred Writings there's no place for conjectures or emendations." He will not "alter one letter in the text" without the authorities given in the notes, but will relegate conjectural criticism to the *Prolegomena*. The work is to be "a Charter, a Magna Charta, to the whole Christian Church; to last when all the ancient MSS. here quoted may be lost and extinguished." As a specimen of his edition, Bentley subjoined the last chapter of Revelation, with notes supporting those readings which he re-

stores to the text, whilst the "received" readings, when displaced, are given in the margin.

The "Proposals" had scarcely appeared when they were anonymously attacked by Dr. Conyers Middleton, who was then in the midst of his feud with Bentley. This was the year of the South Sea scheme, and Dr. Middleton allowed himself to write of "Bentley's Bubble." Bentley's reply—founded on the supposition that his assailant was Colbatch—was still more deplorable. Middleton then printed, with his name, "Some Further Remarks," criticising the "Proposals" more in detail, and on some points with force. Colbatch writes to Middleton: "According to all that I can speak with or hear from, you have laid Bentley flat upon his back." Bentley writes to Atterbury (now Bishop of Rochester): "I scorn to read the rascal's book; but if your Lordship will send me any part which you think the strongest, I will undertake to answer it before night."

Meanwhile the public subscription invited by the "Proposals" already amounted, in 1721, to two thousand pounds. Amidst many distractions, Bentley was certainly continuing to digest his materials. At some time before August, 1726, he received a most important accession to them. The "Vatican" manuscript—which contains the Greek Testament in capital letters as far as the middle of Hebrews ix.—was collated for Bentley by an Italian named Mico. Thomas Bentley, the nephew, being at Rome in 1726, tested Mico's work in three chapters, but did not, as has been supposed, make a complete independent collation. Subsequently the Vaticanus was again collated for Bentley, so far as concerned traces of hands other than "the first," by the Abbé Rulotta, whose services were procured by the Baron de Stosch, then employed in

Italy by the British Government to watch the Pretender. Rulotta's collation reached Bentley in July, 1729. Its accuracy, as compared with that of Angelo Mai, was recognised by Tischendorf, when he saw it at Trinity College in 1855. In that same summer of 1729 Bentley was making inquiries regarding a manuscript, in the Library of the University of Dublin, which contains the text of the three witnesses (1 John v. 7, 8): it is that which is known, from the name of the donor, as the Codex Montfortianus, and is not older than the fifteenth century. Considerable uneasiness appears to have been felt, after the issue of Bentley's "Proposals," at the prospect of his omitting that text, against which he had decided in his lost dissertation in 1717. It is unnecessary to remind readers that more recent criticism has finally rejected the words, for which there is no evidence in Latin before at least the latter part of the fifth century, and none in any other language before the fourteenth.

Here—in the summer of 1729—it has usually been said, as by Monk, that all vestige of the proposed edition ends. A slight but interesting trace, however, carries us three years further. From a marginal note in a copy of the quarto New Testament at Geneva (1620), preserved in the Wake collection at Christ Church, Oxford, it appears that John Walker was still making collations in 1732. These, it cannot be doubted, were auxiliary to Bentley's edition, for which the "Proposals" designate Walker as "overseer and corrector of the press." Seven years more of working life remained to Bentley, before the paralytic seizure which overtook him in 1739. Why was his edition never completed and published? We need not pause on the curiously inadequate reason suggested by Wetstein—that Bentley resented the refusal of

the Government to remit the duty on foreign paper which he desired to import. The dates alone refute that, for the incident occurred in 1721. Probably the answer is to be sought in a combination of two principal causes—the worry of litigation which harassed him from 1729 to 1738; and a growing sense of complexity in the problem of the text, especially after he became better acquainted with the Vatican readings.

Bentley's materials were bequeathed by him to his nephew Richard, possibly in the hope that they might be edited and published. Nothing was done, however. Dr. Richard Bentley returned the subscriptions, and at his death in 1786 bequeathed his uncle's collections to Trinity College, where they have since been preserved. Several volumes contain the collations made by Bentley himself or by his various assistants—including Mico's and Rulotta's collations of the Vaticanus. The point which Bentley's critical work had reached is best shown by a folio copy of the Greek and Latin Vulgate (Paris, "apud Claudium Sonnium," 1628). "Having interleaved it"—he writes to Wetstein—"I have made my essay of restoring both text and version [*i. e.*, both Greek and Latin]; and they agree and tally even to a miracle; but there will be (as near as I can guess) near 6000 variations, great and little, from the received Greek and Latin exemplars." The notes on the interleaved pages are in Bentley's handwriting from the beginning to the end of the New Testament. He used this volume as a general register of results obtained by his collations—the readings of the Vaticanus, which came to him after nearly all the rest, being added in paler ink. It is from this folio that Mr. Ellis prints (besides excerpts) the whole of the Epistle to the Galatians, in his *Bentleii Critica Sacra* (1862); though it

is to be observed that we cannot assume Bentley's final acceptance of the text, as there printed, except in the points on which he has expressly touched. The notes on Revelation xxii. stand in the folio *verbatim* as they were printed in the "Proposals" of 1720. Speaking generally of the work exhibited by the folio, we may say that its leading characteristics are two—wealth of patristic citation, and laborious attention to the order of words. It may further be observed that there does not appear to be any trace of that confident temerity by which Bentley's treatment of the classics was so often marked. Had his edition been published, the promise made in the "Proposals" would, in all probability, have been strictly kept. Conjectural criticisms would have been confined to the *Prolegomena*.

A question of great interest remains. What was the value of the principle on which Bentley founded his design, and how far has that principle been fruitful in later work? Bentley's undertaking (as briefly defined in his letter to Dr. Wake) was, "to give an edition of the Greek Testament exactly as it was in the best exemplars at the time of the Council of Nice" (325 A.D.). He saw that, for this, our ultimate witnesses are the Greek manuscripts nearest in age to that time. But it might still be asked: How can we be sure that these oldest Greek manuscripts represent a text *generally received* at the time when they were written? Bentley replied: I compare them with the oldest received Latin translation that I can find. Such a received Latin version must have represented a received Greek text. Where it confirms our oldest Greek manuscripts, there is the strongest evidence that their text is not merely ancient, but also is that text which the Church received at the time when the Latin version was made

The evidence of the Fathers, and of ancient versions other than Latin, may help to confirm the proof.

These, then, are the two features of Bentley's conception: the appeal from recent documents to *antiquity*—viz., to the first five centuries; and the appeal to *Greek and Latin consent.*

In the particular application of these ideas Bentley laboured under certain disadvantages which were either almost or altogether inseparable from the time at which he worked. First, it was then scarcely possible that he should adequately realise the history of the Greek text previous to his chosen date, the Council of Nice. The Alexandrine manuscript, of the fifth century, containing the whole of the New Testament in Greek capital letters, had been presented to Charles I. by Cyril Lucar, the Patriarch of Constantinople, in 1628. This was believed to be, as Bentley calls it, "the oldest and best in the world." It was regarded as the typical ancient manuscript, not only by the earlier English editors, Walton, Fell, and Mill, but by Bengel in his edition of 1734. This view has since been modified by data, some of which were not then available. Not less than two or three generations before the Council of Nice (325 A.D.), according to the more recent investigations, two influential types of text had already diverged from the apostolic original. These have been called the "Western" and the "Alexandrian." Both are "Pre-Syrian"—to use the convenient term adopted by Dr. Westcott and Dr. Hort—in distinction from the "*Syrian*" Greek text formed at Antioch at some time between 250 and 350 A.D. The "Syrian" text was eclectic, drawing on both the aberrant Pre-Syrian types, "Western" and "Alexandrian," as well as on texts independent of those two aberrations. In a revised form the Syrian text finally

prevailed; a result due partly to the subsequent contraction of Greek Christendom, partly to its centralisation at Constantinople, the ecclesiastical daughter of Antioch.

Four manuscripts of the "uncial" class (written in capitals, as distinguished from "cursive") stand out as the oldest Greek copies of the New Testament. Two belong probably to the middle of the fourth century. One of these is the Vatican manuscript, of which Bentley had no detailed knowledge at the time when he published his "Proposals." Its text is Pre-Syrian, and thus far unique, that in most parts it is free from both Western and Alexandrian corruptions. The other fourth century manuscript is the Sinaitic, of which the New Testament portion first came into Tischendorf's hands in 1859. This also is Pre-Syrian, but with elements both Western and Alexandrian. The Codex Alexandrinus, which Bentley's age deemed the oldest and best, is fundamentally Syrian in the Gospels: in the other books it is still partially Syrian, though Pre-Syrian readings, Western and Alexandrian included, are proportionally more numerous. Thus it contains throughout at least one disturbing element which is absent from the Sinaitic, and at least three which in most of the books are absent from the Vaticanus. The fourth of the oldest uncials is one which Wetstein twice collated at Paris for Bentley—that known as the Codex Ephraemi, because some writings attributed to Ephraem Syrus have been traced over the New Testament. It is coeval with the Alexandrinus, belonging to the fifth century; and, while partly Syrian, it also contains much derived from the earlier texts. In addition to the general but erroneous belief as to the unique value of the Alexandrine manuscript, a singular accident (noticed by Dr. Hort) must have greatly strengthened Bentley's belief in the decisiveness of the

agreement between that document and the Vulgate. Jerome, in preparing the Vulgate, appears to have used a Greek manuscript which happened to have many peculiar readings in common with the Alexandrinus, and to have been partly derived from the same original.

The reader will now be able to imagine the effect which must have been gradually wrought on Bentley's mind, as he came to know the Vaticanus better. With his rare tact and insight, he could hardly fail to perceive that this was a document of first-rate importance, yet one of which the evidence could not be satisfactorily reconciled with the comparatively simple hypothesis which he had based on the assumed primacy of the Alexandrine. For his immediate purpose, it was of far less importance that he was partly in error as to his Latin standard. His view on that subject is connected with a curious instance of his boldness in conjectural criticism. Referring to "interpretationes" or versions of the Bible, Augustine once says, "Let the Italian (*Itala*) be preferred to the rest, since it combines greater closeness with clearness" (*De Doctr. Chr.* II. 15). Bentley, with a rashness which even he seldom exceeded, declared that the "Italian version is a mere dream:" *Itala*, in Augustine, should be *illa*. Archbishop Potter's *usitata*, viewed merely as an emendation, was far more intrinsically probable; but Cardinal Wiseman's arguments in his letters (1832–3)—reinforced by Lachmann's illustrations—have placed it beyond reasonable doubt that Augustine really wrote *Itala*. As to his meaning, all that is certain is that he intended to distinguish this "Italian" text from the "African" (*codices Afros*) which he mentions elsewhere. Of a Latin version, or Latin versions, prior to Jerome's—which was a recension, with the aid of Greek MSS., not a new and original version—Bentley

could scarcely know anything. The documents were first made accessible in Bianchini's *Evangeliarium Quadruplex* (1749), and the Benedictine Sabatier's *Bibliorum Sacrorum Latinae Versiones Antiquae* (1751). It must be remembered, however, that Bentley's aim was to restore the text as received in the fourth century; he did not profess to restore the text of an earlier age.

Bentley's edition would have given to the world the readings of all the older Greek MSS. then known, and an apparatus, still unequalled in its range of authorities, for the text of the Latin Vulgate New Testament: but it would have done more still. Whatever might have been its defects, it would have represented the earliest attempt to construct a text of the New Testament directly from the most ancient documents, without reference to any printed edition. A century passed before such an attempt was again made. Bentley's immediate successors in this field did not work on his distinctive lines. In 1726 Bengel's Greek Testament was almost ready for the press, and he writes thus: "What principally holds me back is the delay of Bentley's promised edition. . . . Bentley possesses invaluable advantages; but he has prepossessions of his own which may prove very detrimental to the Received Text:" this "received text" being, in fact, the Syrian text in its mediæval form. Bengel's text, published at Tübingen in 1734, was not based on Bentley's principles, though the value of these is incidentally recognised in his discussions. Wetstein's edition of 1751–2 supplied fresh materials; in criticism, however, he represents rather a reaction from Bentley's view, for his tendency was to find traces of corruption in any close agreement between the ancient Greek MSS. and the ancient versions. Griesbach prepared the way for a properly critical text by

seeking an historical basis in the genealogy of the documents.

But it was Lachmann, in his small edition of 1831, who first gave a modified fulfilment to Bentley's design, by publishing a text irrespective of the printed tradition, and based wholly on the ancient authorities. Lachmann also applied Bentley's principle of Greek and Latin consent. As Bentley had proposed to use the Vulgate Latin, so Lachmann used what he deemed the best MSS. of the Old Latin—combined with some Latin Fathers and with such Greek MSS. as were manifestly of the same type. Lachmann compared this group of witnesses from the West with the other or "Eastern" Greek authorities; and, where they agreed, he laid stress on that agreement as a security for the genuineness of readings. Bentley had intended to print the Greek text and the Vulgate Latin side by side. Lachmann, in his larger edition (1840–1852), so far executed this plan as to print at the foot of the page a greatly improved Vulgate text, based chiefly on the two oldest MSS. For Lachmann, however, the authority of the Vulgate was only accessory ("*Hieronymo pro se auctore non utimur*"), on account of the higher antiquity of the Old Latin. Those who taunted Lachmann with "aping" Bentley ("simia Bentleii") misrepresented both. It is to Lachmann and to Tregelles that we primarily owe the revived knowledge and appreciation in this country of Bentley's labours on the New Testament, to which Tischendorf also accords recognition in his edition of 1859.

Bentley's place in the history of sacred criticism agrees with the general character of his work in other provinces. His ideas were in advance of his age, and also of the means at his disposal for executing them. He gave an

initial impulse, of which the effect could not be destroyed by the limitation or defeat of his personal labours. After a hundred years of comparative neglect, his conception reappeared as an element of acknowledged value in the methods of riper research. The edition of the New Testament published last year (1881) by Dr. Westcott and Dr. Hort represents a stage of criticism which necessarily lay beyond Bentley's horizon. Yet it is the maturest embodiment of principles which had in him their earliest exponent; and those very delays which closed over his great design may in part be regarded as attesting his growing perception of the rule on which the Cambridge Editors so justly lay stress: "Knowledge of documents should precede final judgment upon readings."

CHAPTER XI.

ENGLISH STYLE.—EDITION OF "PARADISE LOST."

As a writer of English, Bentley is represented by the Dissertation on Phalaris, the Boyle Lectures, the Remarks on a Discourse of Free-thinking, sermons, and letters. These fall mainly within the period from 1690 to 1730. During the earlier half of Bentley's life the canon of polite prose was Dryden or Temple; during the latter half it was Addison. Bentley's English is stamped, as we shall see, with the mind of his age, but has been very little influenced by any phase of its manner. His style is thoroughly individual; it is, in fact, the man. The most striking trait is the nervous, homely English. "Commend me to the man that with a thick hide and solid forehead can stand bluff against plain matter of fact." "If the very first Epistle, of nine lines only, has taken me up four pages in scouring, what a sweet piece of work should I have of it to cleanse all the rest for them!" "Alas, poor Sophist! 'twas ill luck he took none of the money, to fee his advocates lustily; for this is like to be a hard brush." The "polite" writers after the Restoration had discarded such English as vulgar; and we have seen that Boyle's Oxford friends complained of Bentley's "descending to low and mean ways of speech." But, if we allow for the special influence of scriptural language

on the *Pilgrim's Progress*, Bentley drew from the same well as John Bunyan, who died when Bentley was sixteen. Yet Bentley's simple English is racy in a way peculiar to him. It has the tone of a strong mind which goes straight to the truth; it is pointed with the sarcasm of one whose own knowledge is thorough and exact, but who is accustomed to find imposture wrapped up in fine or vague words, and takes an ironical delight in using the very homeliest images and phrases which accurately fit the matter in hand. No one has excelled Bentley in the power of making a pretentious fallacy absurd by the mere force of translation into simple terms; no writer of English has shown greater skill in touching the hidden springs of its native humour.

Here Bentley is the exponent, in his own way, of a spirit which animated the age of Addison and Pope—the assertion of clear common-sense—the desire, as Mr. Leslie Stephen says, "to expel the mystery which had served as a cloak for charlatans." Bentley's English style reflects, however, another side on which he was not in sympathy with the tendencies of contemporary literature. A scholar of profound learning and original vigour had things to say which could not always be said with the sparkling ease of coffee-house conversation. Bentley's colloquialism is that of strenuous argument, not that of polished small talk. As an outward symbol of his separateness from the "wits," we may observe his use of the Latin element in English. The sermons of Jeremy Taylor, whose life closed soon after Bentley's began, abound in portentous Latin words—*longanimity*, *recidivation*, *coadunation*. Bentley has nothing like these; yet the Boyle party, who charged his style with vulgarity, charged it also with pedantry.

He answers this in the Dissertation on Phalaris. "If such a general censure had been always fastened upon those that enrich our language from the Latin and Greek stores, what a fine condition had our language been in! 'Tis well known, it has scarce any words, beside monosyllables, of its native growth; and were all the rest imported and introduced by *pedants?* . . . The words in my book, which he excepts against, are *commentitious*, *repudiate*, *concede*, *aliene*, *vernacular*, *timid*, *negoce*, *putid*, and *idiom;* every one of which were in print, before I used them; and most of them, before I was born." We note in passing that all but three of this list—*commentitious*, *putid*, *negoce*—have lived; and we remember De Quincey's story about *negoce* —that when he was a boy at school (about the year 1798) the use of this word by the master suggested to him that *otium cum dignitate* might be rendered "oce in combination with dignity"—which made him laugh aloud, and thereby forfeit all "oce" for three days. Then Bentley remarks that the "Examiner's" illustrious relative, Robert Boyle, had used *ignore* and *recognosce*—"which nobody has yet thought fit to follow him in." It is curious to find De Quincey saying, in 1830, that *ignore* is Irish, and obsolete in England "except in the use of grand juries;" and even in 1857, it seems, some purists demurred to it. "I would rather use, not my own words only, but even these too"—Bentley concludes—"than that single word of the Examiner's, *cotemporary*, which is a downright barbarism. For the Latins never use *co* for *con*, except before a vowel, as *coequal*, *coeternal;* but, before a consonant, they either retain the N, as *contemporary*, *constitution;* or melt it into another letter, as *collection*, *comprehension*. So that the Examiner's *cotemporary* is a word of his *coposition*, for which the learned world will *cogratulate* him."

Bentley's view as to the probable future of the English language appears from another place in the Dissertation. "The great alterations it has undergone in the two last centuries [1500–1700] are principally owing to that vast stock of Latin words which we have transplanted into our own soil: which being now in a manner exhausted, one may easily presage that it will not have such changes in the two next centuries. Nay, it were no difficult contrivance, if the public had any regard to it, to make the English tongue immutable, unless hereafter some foreign nation shall invade and overrun us." This is in seeming contrast with Bentley's own description of language as an organism liable to continual change, "like the perspiring bodies of living creatures in perpetual motion and alteration." But the inconsistency, I think, is only apparent. He refers to the English vocabulary as a whole. By "immutable" he does not mean to exclude the action of time on details of form or usage, but rather points to such a standard as the French Academy sought to fix for the French language. Since the end of the seventeenth century, the ordinary English vocabulary has lost some foreign words, and acquired others; on the whole, the foreign element has probably not gained ground. Here is a rough test. Mr. Marsh has estimated the percentage of English to non-English words in several English classics. Swift's is about 70 (in one essay, only 68); Gibbon's, 70; Johnson's, 72; Macaulay's, 75. Bentley's own average would, I think, be nearly, if not quite, as high as Macaulay's, and for a like reason; his literary diction was comparatively close to the living speech of educated men in his day. This, indeed, is a marked feature of all Bentley's work, whatever the subject or form may be; the author's personality is so vividly present in it that it is less like writing than speaking.

As in Shakspeare, we meet with those faults of grammar which people were apt to make in talking, or which had even come to be thought idiomatic, through the habit of the ear. Bentley can say, "neither of these two improvements *are* registered"—"*those* sort of requests"—"I'll dispute with nobody about *nothing*" (meaning, "about anything")—"no goat had been there *neither*." This sympathy with living speech, and comparative negligence of rigid syntax, may help us to see how Bentley's genius was in accord with Greek, the voice of life, rather than with Latin, the expression of law. The scholarly trait of Bentley's style is not precise composition, but propriety in the use of words, whether of English or of Latin growth. Some of these Latinisms, though etymologically right, seem odd now: "an acuteness *familiar* to him," *i. e.*, peculiarly his own: "*excision*" for "utter destruction:" "a plain and *punctual* testimony"—*i. e.*, just to the point. Yet, on the whole, Bentley's vocabulary contains a decidedly larger proportion of pure English than was then usual in the higher literature. No one is less pedantic. At his best he is, in his own way, matchless: at his worst, he is sometimes rough or clumsy; but he is never weak, and never anything else than natural. His style in hand-to-hand critical combat—as in the Phalaris Dissertation—is that by which he is best known. I may here give a short specimen of a different manner, from a Sermon which he preached at St. James's in 1717. He is speaking on the words, "none of us liveth to himself" (Romans xiv. 7):

"Without society and government, man would be found in a worse condition than the very beasts of the field. That divine ray of reason, which is his privilege above the brutes, would only serve in that case to make him more sensible of his wants, and more uneasy and

melancholic under them. Now, if society and mutual friendship be so essential and necessary to the happiness of mankind, 'tis a clear consequence, that all such obligations as are necessary to maintain society and friendship are incumbent on every man. No one, therefore, that lives in society, and expects his share in the benefits of it, can be said to live to himself.

"No, he lives to his prince and his country; he lives to his parents and his family; he lives to his friends and to all under his trust; he lives even to foreigners, under the mutual sanctions and stipulations of alliance and commerce; nay, he lives to the whole race of mankind: whatsoever has the character of man, and wears the same image of God that he does, is truly his brother, and, on account of that natural consanguinity, has a just claim to his kindness and benevolence. . . : The nearer one can arrive to this universal charity, this benevolence to all human race, the more he has of the divine character imprinted on his soul; for *God is love*, says the apostle; he delights in the happiness of all his creatures. To this public principle we owe our thanks for the inventors of sciences and arts; for the founders of kingdoms, and first institutors of laws; for the heroes that hazard or abandon their own lives for the dearer love of their country; for the statesmen that generously sacrifice their private profit and ease to establish the public peace and prosperity for ages to come.

"And if nature's still voice be listened to, this is really not only the noblest, but the pleasantest employment. For though gratitude, and a due acknowledgment and return of kindness received, is a desirable good, and implanted in our nature by God himself, as a spur to mutual beneficence, yet, in the whole, 'tis certainly much more pleasant to love than to be beloved again. For the sweetness and felicity of life consists in duly exerting and employing those sociable passions of the soul, those natural inclinations to charity and compassion. And he that has given his mind a contrary turn and bias, that has made it the seat of selfishness and of unconcernment for all about him, has deprived himself of the greatest comfort and relish of life. Whilst he foolishly designs to live to himself alone, he loses that very thing which makes life itself desirable. So that, in a word, if we are created by our Maker to enjoy happiness and contentment in our being; if we are born for society, and friendship, and mutual assistance; if we are designed to live as men, and not as

wild beasts of the desert; we must truly say, in the words of our text, that none of us *liveth to himself*."

It will be noticed that in the above extract there are no sentences of unwieldy length, no involved constructions, such as usually encumbered the more elaborate prose of the seventeenth century. Comparatively short sentences, and lucid structure, are general marks of Bentley's English; and here, again, he reflects the desire of his age for *clearness*. It has been said that the special work of the eighteenth century was to form prose style. Bentley has his peculiar place among its earlier masters.

Mention is due to the only English verses which he is known to have written after boyhood. When Johnson recited them, Adam Smith remarked that they were "very well; very well." "Yes, they *are* very well, sir," said Johnson; "but you may observe in what manner they are well. They are the forcible verses of a man of strong mind, but not accustomed to write verse; for there is some uncouthness in the expression." A Trinity undergraduate had written a graceful imitation of Horace's Ode, *Angustam amice pauperiem pati* (III. ii.); with which Bentley was so much pleased that he straightway composed a parody on it. The gist of the young man's piece is that an exemplary student is secure of applause and happiness; Bentley sings that he is pretty sure to be attacked, and very likely to be shelved. The choice of typical men is interesting; Newton, and the geologist, John Woodward, for science; Selden, for erudition; for theological controversy, Whiston, whom the University had expelled on account of his Arianism. (The following is Monk's version: Boswell's differs in a few points, mostly for the worse; but in v. 11 rightly gives "days and nights" for "day and night.")

"Who strives to mount Parnassus' hill,
And thence poetic laurels bring,
Must first acquire due force and skill,
Must fly with swan's or eagle's wing.

"Who Nature's treasures would explore,
Her mysteries and arcana know,
Must high, as lofty NEWTON, soar,
Must stoop, as delving WOODWARD, low.

"Who studies ancient laws and rites,
Tongues, arts, and arms, all history,
Must drudge, like SELDEN, days and nights,
And in the endless labour die.

"Who travels* in religious jarrs,
Truth mix'd with error, shade with rays,
Like WHISTON, wanting pyx and stars,
In ocean wide or sinks or strays.

* *I travails.*

"But grant our hero's hope, long toil
And comprehensive genius crown,
All sciences, all arts his spoil,
Yet what reward, or what renown?

"ENVY, innate in vulgar souls,
Envy steps in and stops his rise;
Envy with poison'd tarnish fouls
His lustre, and his worth decries.

"He lives inglorious or in want,
To college and old books confin'd;
Instead of learn'd, he's call'd pedant;
Dunces advanc'd, he's left behind:
Yet left content, a genuine stoic he,
Great without patron, rich without South-sea."

The third line from the end is significant. He had been mentioned for a bishopric once or twice, but passed

over. In 1709, when Chichester was vacant, Baron Spanheim and the Earl of Pembroke (then Lord High Admiral) had vainly used their interest for Bentley. We have seen that in 1724—about two years after these verses were written—he declined the see of Bristol.

Now we must consider Bentley's criticisms on *Paradise Lost.* In 1725 an edition of that poem had appeared with a Life of Milton by Elijah Fenton (1683–1730), who helped Pope in translating the *Odyssey.* Fenton incidentally suggested some corrections of words which, he thought, might have taken the place of other words similar in sound. This seems to have put Bentley on his mettle: at any rate, he is said to have meditated notes in 1726. His edition of *Paradise Lost* appeared in 1732, and is said to have been immediately due to a wish expressed by Queen Caroline "that the great critic should exercise his talents upon an edition" of Milton, "and thus gratify those readers who could not enjoy his celebrated lucubrations on classical writers." It may safely be assumed, however, that the royal lady did not contemplate any such work as our Aristarchus produced. Probably she thought that the learning, especially classical learning, which enters so largely into Milton's epic would afford a good field for illustrative commentary to a classical scholar.

"'Tis but common justice"—Bentley's preface begins—"to let the purchaser know what he is to expect in this new edition of *Paradise Lost.* Our celebrated Author, when he compos'd this poem, being obnoxious to the Government, poor, friendless, and, what is worst of all, blind with a *gutta serena*, could only dictate his verses to be writ by another." The amanuensis made numerous mistakes in spelling and pointing; Bentley says that he has tacitly corrected these merely clerical errors. But there

was a more serious offender than the amanuensis; namely, the *editor*. This person owes his existence to Bentley's vigorous imagination. "The friend or acquaintance, whoever he was, to whom Milton committed his copy and the overseeing of the press, did so vilely execute that trust, that *Paradise* under his ignorance and audaciousness may be said to be *twice lost*." This editor is responsible for many careless changes of word or phrase; for instance:

"on the secret top
Of Horeb or of Sinai—"

"secret" is this editor's blunder for "sacred." Bentley gives 48 examples of such culpable carelessness. But even that is not the worst. "This suppos'd Friend (call'd in these Notes the Editor), knowing Milton's bad circumstances"—the evil days and evil tongues—profited by them to perpetrate a deliberate fraud of the most heartless kind. Having a turn for verse-writing, he actually interpolated many lines of his own; Bentley gives 66 of them as examples. They can always be "detected by their own silliness and unfitness." So much for the half-educated amanuensis and the wholly depraved editor. But Milton himself has made some "slips and inadvertencies too;" there are "some inconsistences [*sic*] in the system and plan of his poem, for want of his revisal of the whole before its publication." Sixteen examples are then given. These are beyond merely verbal emendation. They require "a change both of words and sense." Bentley lays stress on the fact that he merely suggests remedies for the errors due to Milton himself, but does not "obtrude" them; adding, "it is hoped, even these will not be found absurd, or disagreeing from the Miltonian character;" and he quotes from Virgil: "I, too, have written verses: me

also the shepherds call a singer; but I will not lightly believe them." This is perhaps the only thing in the preface that distinctly suggests senility; it afterwards gave rise to this doggrel:

> "How could vile sycophants contrive
> A lie so gross to raise,
> Which even Bentley can't believe,
> Though spoke in his own praise?"

The preface concludes with a glowing tribute to Milton's great poem. Labouring under all this "miserable deformity by the press," it could still charm, like "Terence's beautiful Virgin, who, in spite of neglect, sorrow, and beggarly habit, did yet appear so very amiable." There is some real pathos in the following passage—remarkable as the only one (so far as I know) in Bentley's writings where he alludes to the long troubles of his College life as causes of *pain*, and not merely of interruption:

"But I wonder not so much at the poem itself, though worthy of all wonder; as that the author could so abstract his thoughts from his own troubles, as to be able to make it; that confin'd in a narrow and to him a dark chamber, surrounded with cares and fears, he could spatiate at large through the compass of the whole universe, and through all heaven beyond it; could survey all periods of time, from before the creation to the consummation of all things. This theory [*i.e.*, contemplation], no doubt, was a great solace to him in his affliction; but it shows in him a greater strength of spirit, that made him capable of such a solace. And it would almost seem to me to be peculiar to him; had not experience by others taught me, that there is that power in the human mind, supported with innocence and *conscia virtus;* that can make it quite shake off all outward uneasinesses, and involve itself secure and pleas'd in its own integrity and entertainment."

Bentley appears to have fully anticipated the strong prejudice which his recension of Milton would have to

meet. Forty years ago, he says, "it would have been prudence to have suppress'd" it, "for fear of injuring one's rising fortune." But now seventy years admonished him to pay his critical debts, regardless of worldly loss or gain. "I made the Notes extempore, and put them to the press as soon as made; without any apprehension of growing leaner by censures or plumper by commendations." So ends the preface.

Bentley's work on Milton is of a kind which can be fairly estimated by a few specimens, for its essential character is the same throughout. We need not dwell on those "inconsistencies in the plan and system of the poem" which Bentley ascribes to Milton himself. Some of these are real, others vanish before a closer examination; but none of those which really exist can be removed without rewriting the passages affected. Bentley admits this; and to criticise his changes would be merely to compare the respective merits of Milton and Bentley as poets. Nor, again, need we concern ourselves with those alleged faults of the amanuensis in spelling and pointing which are tacitly corrected. The proper test of Bentley's work, as a critical recension of *Paradise Lost*, is his treatment of those blemishes which he imputes to the supposed "editor." These are of two kinds—wilful interpolations and inadvertent changes. An example of alleged interpolation is afforded by the following passage (*Par. Lost*, I. 338–355), where the fallen angels are assembling at the summons of their leader:

> "As when the potent rod
> Of Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day,
> Waved round the coast, up-called a pitchy cloud
> Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,
> That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung
> Like Night, and darkened all the land of Nile;

So numberless were those bad Angels seen
Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell,
'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires;
Till, as a signal given, the uplifted spear
Of their great Sultan waving to direct
Their course, in even balance down they light
On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain:
A multitude like which the populous North
Poured never from her frozen loins to pass
Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons
Came like a deluge on the South, and spread
Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands."

The last five lines are rejected by Bentley as due to the fraudulent editor. Here is his note:

"After he [Milton] had compared the Devils for number to the cloud of locusts that darken'd all Egypt, as before to the leaves that cover the ground in autumn [v. 302, 'Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks In Vallombrosa'], 'tis both to clog and to lessen the thought, to mention here the Northern Excursions, when all human race would be too few. Besides the diction is faulty; *frozen loins* are improper for *populousness;* Gibraltar is a new name, since those inroads were made; and to spread from thence to the Libyan sands, is to spread over the surface of the sea."

It would be idle to multiply instances of "interpolation:" this is a fair average sample. I will now illustrate the other class of "editorial" misdeeds—careless alterations. Book VI. 509:

"Up they turned
Wide the celestial soil, and saw beneath
The originals of Nature in their crude
Conception; sulphurous and nitrous foam
They found, they mingled, and, with subtle art
Concocted and adusted, they reduced
To blackest grain, and into store conveyed."

Bentley annotates:

N 9 13

"It must be very subtle Art, even in Devils themselves, to adust brimstone and saltpetre. But then he mentions only these two materials, which without *charcoal* can never make gunpowder."

Here, then, is the last part of the passage, rescued from the editor, and restored to Milton:

> "Sulphurous and nitrous foam
> *They pound, they mingle, and with sooty chark*
> Concocted and adusted, they *reduce*
> To blackest grain, and into store *convey*."

Let us take next the last lines of the poem (XII. 641 f.):

> "They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
> Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
> Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate
> With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.
> Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
> The world was all before them, where to choose
> Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
> *They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,*
> *Through Eden took their solitary way.*"

Addison had remarked that the poem would close better if the last two lines were absent. Bentley—without naming Addison, to whom he alludes as "an ingenious and celebrated writer"—deprecates their omission. "Without them Adam and Eve would be left in the Territory and Suburbane of Paradise, in the very view of the *dreadful faces.*" At the same time Bentley holds that the two lines have been gravely corrupted by the editor. These are his grounds:

"Milton tells us before, that Adam, upon hearing Michael's predictions, was even surcharg'd with joy (XII. 372); was replete with joy and wonder (468); was in doubt, whether he should repent of, or rejoice in, his fall (475); was in great peace of thought (558); and Eve herself was *not sad*, but full of *consolation* (620). Why then

does this distich dismiss our first parents in anguish, and the reader in melancholy? And how can the expression be justified, 'with wand'ring steps and slow?' Why *wan'dring?* Erratic steps? Very improper: when in the line before, they were guided by Providence. And why *slow?* when even Eve profess'd her readiness and alacrity for the journey (614): '*But now lead on; In me is no delay.*' And why 'their solitary way?' All words to represent a sorrowful parting? when even their former walks in Paradise were as solitary as their way now: there being nobody besides them two, both here and there. Shall I therefore, after so many prior presumptions, presume at last to offer a distich, as close as may be to the author's words, and entirely agreeable to his scheme?

> '*Then* hand in hand *with social steps their way*
> Through Eden took, *with heav'nly comfort cheer'd.*'"

The total number of emendations proposed by Bentley in *Paradise Lost* rather exceeds 800. Not a word of the received text is altered in his edition; but the parts believed to be corrupt are printed in italics, with the proposed remedy in the margin. Most of the new readings aim at stricter propriety in the use of language, better logic, or clearer syntax—briefly, at "correctness." It is a significant fact that Pope liked many of them, and wrote "*pulchre*," "*bene*," "*recte*" opposite them in his copy of Bentley's edition—in spite of that line in the *Dunciad* which describes our critic as "having humbled Milton's strains." But even where we concede that the new reading is what Milton ought to have given, we can nearly always feel morally certain that he did not give it. I have found only one instance which strikes me as an exception. It is in that passage of Book VI. (332) which describes Satan wounded by the sword of the archangel Michael:

> "From the gash
> A stream of nectarous humour issuing flowed
> Sanguine, such as celestial Spirits may bleed."

"Nectar" is the wine of the gods; Homer has another name for the etherial juice which flows in their veins. Thus when Diomedes wounds the goddess Aphrodite: "*The immortal blood of the goddess flowed forth, even* ichor, *such as flows in the veins of blessed gods* (Iliad, v. 389). For "nectarous" Bentley proposed "ichorous." The form of Milton's verse—"such as celestial Spirits may bleed"—indicates that he was thinking of the Iliad, and no poet was less likely than Milton to confuse "nectar" with "ichor." Bentley's correction, if not true, deserves to be so.

Johnson has characterised Bentley's hypothesis of the "editor" in well-known terms—"a supposition rash and groundless, if he thought it true; and vile and pernicious, if, as is said, he in private allowed it to be false." Bentley cannot be impaled on the second horn of the dilemma. No one who has read his preface, or, who understands the bent of his mind, will entertain the idea that he wished to impose on his readers by a fiction which he himself did not believe. Monk has another explanation. "The ideal agency of the reviser of *Paradise Lost* was only a device to take off the odium of perpetually condemning and altering the words of the great poet. . . . At the same time, *he was neither deceived himself*, nor intended to deceive others." But Monk has not observed that a passage in Bentley's preface expressly excludes this plausible view. "If any one" (says Bentley) "fancy this *Persona* of an editor to be a mere Fantom, a Fiction, an Artifice to skreen Milton himself; let him consider these four and sole changes made in the second edition: I. 505, V. 638, XI. 485, 551. . . . If the Editor durst insert his forgeries, even in the second edition, when the Poem and its Author had slowly grown to a vast reputation; what durst he not do in the

first, under the poet's poverty, infamy, and an universal odium from the royal and triumphant party?" The *Paradise Regained* and the *Samson Agonistes* are uncorrupted, Bentley adds, because Milton had then dismissed this editor.

There can be no doubt, I think, that Bentley's theory of the depraved editor was broached in perfect good faith. True, he supposes this editor to have taken fewer liberties with Book XII.—an assumption which suited his desire to publish before Parliament met. But that is only an instance of a man bringing himself to believe just what he wishes to believe. How he could believe it, is another question. If he had consulted the Life of Milton by the poet's nephew, Edward Phillips (1694), he would have found some adverse testimony. *Paradise Lost* was originally written down in small groups of some ten to thirty verses by any hand that happened to be near Milton at the time. But, when it was complete, Phillips helped his uncle in carefully revising it, with minute attention to those matters of spelling and pointing in which the amanuensis might have failed. The first edition (1667), so far from being "miserably deformed by the press," was remarkably accurate. As Mr. Masson says, "very great care must have been bestowed on the revising of the proofs, either by Milton himself, or by some competent person who had undertaken to see the book through the press for him. It seems likely that Milton himself caused page after page to be read over slowly to him, and occasionally even the words to be spelt out." Bentley insists that the changes in the second edition of 1674 were due to the editor. Phillips says of this second edition: "amended, enlarg'd, and differently dispos'd as to the number of books" [XII. instead of X., books VII. and X. being now

divided] "by his own hand, that is by his own appointment." But the habit of mind which Bentley had formed by free conjectural criticism was such as to pass lightly over any such difficulties, even if he had clearly realised them. He felt confident in his own power of improving Milton's text; and he was eager to exercise it. The fact of Milton's blindness suggested a view of the text which he adopted; not, assuredly, without believing it; but with a belief rendered more easy by his wish.

Bentley's *Paradise Lost* raises an obvious question. We know that his emendations of Milton are nearly all bad. The general style of argument which he applies to Milton is the same which he applies to the classical authors. Are his emendations of these also bad? I should answer: Many of his critical emendations, especially Latin, are bad; but many of them are good in a way and in a degree for which *Paradise Lost* afforded no scope. It is a rule applicable to most of Bentley's corrections, that their merit varies inversely with the soundness of the text. Where the text seemed altogether hopeless, he was at his best; where it was corrupted, but not deeply, he was usually good, though often not convincing; where it was true, yet difficult, through some trick (faulty in itself, perhaps) of individual thought or style, he was apt to meddle overmuch. It was his forte to make rough places smooth; his foible, to make smooth places rough. If *Paradise Lost* had come to Bentley as a manuscript, largely defaced by grave blunders and deeply-seated corruptions, his restoration of it would probably have deserved applause. The fact that his edition was regarded as a proof of dotage, shows how erroneously his contemporaries had conceived the qualities of his previous work. Bentley's mind was logical, positive, acute; wonderfully acute, where intellect-

ual problems were not complicated with moral sympathies. Sending flashes of piercing insight over a wide and then dim field, he made discoveries; among other things, he found probable or certain answers to many verbal riddles. His "faculty of divination" was to himself a special source of joy and pride; nor unnaturally, when we recall its most brilliant feats. But verbal emendation was only one phase of his work; and, just because it was with him a mental indulgence, almost a passion, we must guard against assuming that the *average* success with which he applied it is the chief criterion of his power.

The faults of Bentley's *Paradise Lost* are, in kind, the faults of his Horace, but are more evident to an English reader, and are worse in degree, since the English text, unlike the Latin, affords no real ground for suspicion. The intellectual acuteness which marks the Horace is present also in the notes on *Paradise Lost*, but seldom wins admiration, more often appears ridiculous, because the English reader can usually see that it is grotesquely misplaced. A great and characteristic merit of Bentley's classical work, its instructiveness to students of a foreign language and literature, is necessarily absent here. And the book was got ready for the press with extreme haste. Still, the editor of *Paradise Lost* is not the Horatian editor gone mad. He is merely the Horatian editor showing increased rashness in a still more unfavourable field, where failure was at once so gratuitous and so conspicuous as to look like self-caricature, whilst there was no proper scope for the distinctive qualities of his genius. As to poetical taste, we may at least make some allowance for the standards of the "correct" period: let us think of Johnson's remarks on Milton's versification, and remember that some of Bentley's improvements on Milton were privately admired by Pope.

CHAPTER XII.

DOMESTIC LIFE.—LAST YEARS.

At the age of thirty-eight, when explaining his delay to answer Charles Boyle, Bentley spoke of his own "natural aversion to all quarrels and broils." This has often, perhaps, been read with a smile by those who thought of his later feuds. I believe that it was quite true. Bentley was a born student. He was not, by innate impulse, a writer, still less an aspirant to prizes of the kind for which men chiefly wrangle. But his self-confidence had been exalted by the number of instances in which he had been able to explode fallacies, or to detect errors which had escaped the greatest of previous scholars. He became a dogmatic believer in the truth of his own instinctive perceptions. At last, opposition to his decrees struck him as a proof of deficient capacity, or else of moral obliquity. This habit of mind insensibly extended itself from verbal criticism into other fields of judgment. He grew less and less fit to deal with men on a basis of equal rights, because he too often carried into official or social intercourse the temper formed in his library by intellectual despotism over the blunders of the absent or the dead. He was rather too apt to treat those who differed from him as if they were various readings that had cropped up from "scrub manuscripts," or "scoundrel copies," as he has it in his reply to

Middleton. He liked to efface such persons as he would expunge false concords, or to correct them as he would remedy flagrant instances of hiatus. This was what made him so specially unfit for the peaceable administration of a College. It was hard for him to be *primus inter pares*—first among peers, but harder still to be *primus intra parietes*—to live within the same walls with those peers. The frequent personal association which the circumstances of his office involved was precisely calculated to show him constantly on his worst side. He would probably have made a better bishop—though not, perhaps, a very good one—just because his contact would have been less close and continual with those over whom he was placed. Bentley had many of the qualities of a beneficent ruler, but hardly of a constitutional ruler. If he had been the sole heir of Peisistratus, he would have bestowed the best gifts of paternal government on those Athenian blacksmiths to whom he compared Joshua Barnes, and no swords would have been wreathed with myrtle in honour of a tyrannicide.

This warm-hearted, imperious man, with affections the stronger because they were not diffuse, was seen to the greatest advantage in family life, either because his monarchy was undisputed, or because there he could reign without governing. His happy marriage brought him four children—Elizabeth and Joanna—a son, William, who died in earliest infancy—and Richard, the youngest, born in 1708, who grew to be an accomplished but eccentric and rather aimless man; enough of a dilettante to win the good graces of Horace Walpole, and too little of a dependent to keep them.

It is pleasant to turn from the College feuds, and to think that within its precincts there was at least such a

refuge from strife as the home in which these children grew up. The habits of the Bentley household were simple, and such as adapted themselves to the life of an indefatigable student. Bentley usually breakfasted alone in his library, and, at least in later years, was often not visible till dinner. When the *Spectator* was coming out, he took great delight in hearing the children read it aloud to him, and—as Joanna told her son—"was so particularly amused by the character of Sir Roger de Coverley, that he took his literary decease most seriously to heart." After evening prayers at ten, the family retired, while Bentley, "habited in his dressing-gown," returned to his books. In 1708 his eyes suffered for a short time from reading at night; but he kept up the habit long afterwards. The celebrated "Proposals for Printing" the Greek Testament were drawn up by candle-light in a single evening. Latterly, he had a few intimate friends at Cambridge—some five or six Fellows of the College, foremost among whom was Richard Walker—and three or four other members of the University; just as in London his intercourse was chiefly with a very small and select group—Newton, Dr. Samuel Clarke, Dr. Mead, and a few more. "His establishment," says his grandson, "was respectable, and his table affluently and hospitably served." "Of his pecuniary affairs he took no account; he had no use for money, and dismissed it entirely from his thoughts." Mrs. Bentley managed everything. Can this be the Bentley, it will be asked, who built the staircase and the hen-house, and who practised extortion on the Doctors of Divinity? The fact seems to be, as Cumberland puts it, that Bentley had no love of money for its own sake. Many instances of his liberality are on record, especially to poor students, or in literary matters. But he had a strong feeling for the dig-

nity of his station, and a frank conviction that the College ought to honour itself by seeing that his surroundings were appropriate; and he had also a Yorkshireman's share of the British dislike to being cheated. Bentley's total income was, for his position, but moderate, and his testamentary provision for his family was sufficiently slender to exempt him from the charge of penurious hoarding.

At one time Mrs. Bentley and the children used to make an annual journey to London, where the Master of Trinity, as Royal Librarian, had official lodgings at Cotton House. Then there was an occasional visit to the Bernards in Huntingdonshire, or to Hampshire, after Elizabeth, the eldest daughter, had married Mr. Humphrey Ridge of that county; and this was as much variety as the wisdom of our ancestors desired. At Cambridge Bentley took scarcely any exercise, except in pacing up and down a terrace-walk by the river, which was made when the Master's garden was laid out in 1717. We hear, however, of his joining a fishing expedition to Over, a place about six miles from Cambridge, though some may doubt whether Bentley had the right temperament for that pursuit. After middle age he was peculiarly liable to severe colds —a result of sedentary life—and was obliged to avoid draughts as much as possible. From 1727 he ceased to preside in the College Hall at festivals; and at about the same time he nominated a deputy at the "acts" in the Divinity School. In 1729 it was complained that for many years he had discontinued his attendance in the College Chapel. One incident has good evidence. On an evening in 1724, just after his degrees had been restored, he went to the Chapel; the door-lock of the Master's stall was so rusty that he could not open it. Here are some contemporary verses preserved by Granger:

"The virger tugs with fruitless pains;
The rust invincible remains.
Who can describe his woful plight,
Plac'd thus in view, in fullest light,
A spectacle of mirth, expos'd
To sneering friends and giggling foes?
Then first, as 'tis from fame receiv'd
(But fame can't always be believ'd),
A blush, the sign of new-born grace,
Gleam'd through the horrors of his face.
He held it shameful to retreat,
And worse to take the lower seat.
The virger soon, with nimble bound,
At once vaults o'er the wooden mound,
And gives the door a furious knock,
Which forc'd the disobedient lock."

After 1734 he practically ceased to attend the meetings of the Seniority: the last occasion on which he presided was Nov. 8, 1737. His inability or reluctance to leave his house is shown in 1739 by a curious fact. A Fellow of a College had been convicted of atheistical views by a private letter which another member of the same society had picked up in the quadrangle—and read. The meeting of the Vice-chancellor's Court at which sentence was to be passed was held at Trinity Lodge. Dr. Monk regards this as a "compliment to the father of the University," but there was also a simpler motive. Only eight Heads of Houses had attended in the Schools; nine were required for a verdict; and, feeling the improbability of Bentley coming to them, they went to Bentley. On seeing the accused—a puny person—the Master of Trinity observed, "What! is that the atheist? I expected to have seen a man as big as Burrough the beadle!" Sentence was passed—expulsion from the University.

It seems to have been soon after this, in 1739, that

Bentley had a paralytic stroke—not a severe one, however. He was thenceforth unable to move easily without assistance, but we have his grandson's authority for saying that Bentley "to the last hour of his life possessed his faculties firm and in their fullest vigour." He called himself—Markland says—"an old trunk, which, if you let it alone, will last a long time; but if you jumble it by moving, will soon fall to pieces."

Joanna Bentley, the second daughter, was her father's favourite child—"Jug" was his pet-name for her—and she seems to have inherited much of his vivacity, with rather more of his turn for humorous satire than was at that period thought quite decorous in the gentle sex. Her son seems inclined to apologise for it; and Dr. Monk, too, faintly hints his regret. At the age of eleven she was the "Phœbe" of a Pastoral in the *Spectator*—the "Colin" being John Byrom, B.A., of Trinity; and, after causing several members of the College to sigh, and a few to sing, Joanna was married, in 1728, to Denison Cumberland, of Trinity—a grandson of the distinguished Bishop of Peterborough. Their son, Richard Cumberland, was a versatile author. Besides novels, comedies, and an epic poem, he wrote the once popular *Observer*, and *Anecdotes of Spanish Painters*. Goldsmith called him "the Terence of England;" Walter Scott commented on his tendency "to reverse the natural and useful practice of courtship, and to throw upon the softer sex the task of wooing;" but Cumberland's name has no record more pleasing than those *Memoirs* to which we chiefly owe our knowledge of Bentley's old age.

It was early in 1740 that death parted the old man from the companion who had shared so many years of storm or sunshine beyond the doors, but always of happi-

ness within them. Richard Cumberland was eight years old when Mrs. Bentley died. "I have a perfect recollection of the person of my grandmother, and a full impression of her manners and habits, which, though in some degree tinctured with hereditary reserve and the primitive cast of character, were entirely free from the hypocritical cant and affected sanctity of the Oliverians." (Her family, the Bernards, were related to the Cromwells.) A most favourable impression is given by a letter—one of those printed by Dr. Luard at the end of Rud's *Diary*—in which she discusses the prospect (in 1732) of the College case being decided against Bentley. Her life had been gentle, kindly, and unselfish; her last words, which her daughter Joanna heard, were—"It is all bright, it is all glorious." Dreary indeed must have been Bentley's solitude now, but for his daughters. Elizabeth had returned to her father's house after the death of her husband, Mr. Ridge; and henceforth Mrs. Cumberland was much at Trinity Lodge, with her two children—Richard, and a girl somewhat older. And now we get the best possible testimony to the lovable elements in Bentley's nature—the testimony of children. "He was the unwearied patron and promoter of all our childish sports. . . . I have broken in upon him many a time" (says Cumberland) "in his hours of study, when he would put his book aside, ring his hand-bell for his servant, and be led to his shelves to take down a picture-book for my amusement. I do not say that his good-nature always gained its object, as the pictures which his books generally supplied me with were anatomical drawings of dissected bodies, . . . but he had nothing better to produce." "Once, and only once, I recollect his giving me a gentle rebuke for making a most outrageous noise in the room over his library, and

disturbing him in his studies; I had no apprehension of anger from him, and confidently answered that I could not help it, as I had been at battledore and shuttlecock with Master Gooch, the Bishop of Ely's son." (This was the Dr. Gooch who, as Vice-chancellor, had suspended Bentley's degrees.) "And I have been at this sport with his father," he replied; "but thine has been the more amusing game; so there's no harm done." The boy's holidays from his school at Bury St. Edmund's were now often spent at Trinity Lodge, and in the bright memories which they left with him his grandfather was the central figure. "I was admitted to dine at his table, had my seat next to his chair, served him in many little offices." Bentley saw what pleasure these gave the boy, and invented occasions to employ him.

Bentley's "ordinary style of conversation was naturally lofty"—his grandson says. He also used *thou* and *thee* more than was usually considered polite, and this gave his talk a somewhat dictatorial tone. "But the native candour and inherent tenderness of his heart could not long be veiled from observation, for his feelings and affections were at once too impulsive to be long repressed, and he too careless of concealment to attempt at qualifying them." Instances of his good-nature are quoted which are highly characteristic in other ways too. At that time the Master and Seniors examined candidates for Fellowships orally as well as on paper. If Bentley saw that a candidate was nervous, he "was never known to press him," says Cumberland; rather he "would take all the pains of expounding on himself"—and credit the embarrassed youth with the answer. Once a burglar who had stolen some of Bentley's plate was caught "with the very articles upon him," and "Commissary Greaves" was for

sending him to gaol. Bentley interposed. "Why tell the man he is a thief? He knows that well enough, without thy information, Greaves. — Hark ye, fellow, thou see'st the trade which thou hast taken up is an unprofitable trade; therefore get thee gone, lay aside an occupation by which thou can'st gain nothing but a halter, and follow that by which thou may'st earn an honest livelihood." Everybody remonstrated, but the burglar was set at large. This was a thoroughly Bentleian way of showing how the quality of mercy can bless him that gives and him that takes. He never bestowed a thought on the principle; he was preoccupied by his own acute and confident perception that *this* man would not steal again; and he disposed of Commissary Greaves as if he had been a mere gloss, a redundant phrase due to interpolation.

Next to the Vice-master, Dr. Walker — to whom in 1739 the duties of Master were virtually transferred — Bentley's most frequent visitors were a few scholars — such as Jeremiah Markland, an ingenious critic, with a real feeling for language; Walter Taylor, the Regius Professor of Greek; John Taylor, the well-known editor of Lysias and Demosthenes; and the two nephews, Thomas and Richard Bentley. At seventy, he learned to smoke; and he is believed to have liked port, but to have said of claret that "it would be port if it could." He would sometimes speak of his early labours and aims, but the literary subject uppermost in his mind seems to have been his Homer. One evening, when Richard Cumberland was at the Lodge in his holidays, his school-master, Arthur Kinsman, called with Dr. Walker. Kinsman "began to open his school-books upon Bentley, and had drawn him into Homer; Greek now rolled in torrents from the lips of Bent-

ley, . . . in a strain delectable, indeed, to the ear, but not very edifying to poor little me and the ladies."

In March, 1742—about four months before Bentley's death—the fourth book of the *Dunciad* came out, with Pope's highly-wrought but curiously empty satire on the greatest scholar then living in England or in Europe. Bentley heads an academic throng who offer homage at the throne of Dulness:

> "Before them march'd that awful Aristarch,
> Plow'd was his front with many a deep remark:
> His hat, which never vail'd to human pride,
> Walker with rev'rence took, and laid aside."

Then Bentley introduces himself to the goddess as

> "Thy mighty scholiast, whose unwearied pains
> Made Horace dull, and humbled Milton's strains."

The final touch—"Walker, our hat!—nor more he deign'd to say"—was taken from a story current then. Philip Miller, the botanist, had called on Bentley at Trinity Lodge, and after dinner plied him with classical questions, until Bentley, having exhausted such mild hints as "Drink your wine, sir!" exclaimed, "Walker! my hat"—and left the room. Cumberland remembers the large, broad-brimmed hat hanging on a peg at the back of Bentley's arm-chair, who sometimes wore it in his study to shade his eyes; and after his death it could be seen in the College-rooms of the friend with whose name Pope has linked it.

Pope had opened fire on Bentley long before this. The first edition of the *Dunciad* (1728) had the line—"*Bentley* his mouth with classic flatt'ry opes"—but in the edition of 1729 "Bentley" was changed to *Welsted;* and when—after Bentley's death—his name was once more

placed there, it was explained as referring to *Thomas* Bentley, the nephew. Then, in the "Epistle to Arbuthnot" (1735), Pope coupled Bentley with the Shakspearian critic Theobald—"Tibbalds" rhyming to "ribalds;" and in the Epistle imitating that of Horace to Augustus (1737), after criticising Milton, adds:

> "Not that I'd lop the beauties from his book,
> Like slashing Bentley with his desp'rate hook."

Some indignant protest from Thomas Bentley seems to have roused Pope's ire to the more elaborate attack in the fourth book of the *Dunciad*. Why did Pope dislike Bentley? "I talked against his Homer"—this was Bentley's own account of it—"and the portentous cub never forgives." It is more likely that some remarks had been repeated to Pope, than that Bentley should have said to the poet at Bishop Atterbury's table, "A pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer." This was gossip dramatising the cause of the grudge. Then Pope's friendship with Atterbury and Swift would lead him to take the Boyle view of the Phalaris affair. And Warburton, Pope's chief ally of the *Dunciad* period, felt towards Bentley that peculiar form of jealous antipathy with which an inaccurate writer on scholarly subjects will sometimes regard scholars. After Bentley's death, Warburton spoke of him as "a truly great and injured man," &c.; before it, he invariably, though timidly, disparaged him. Swift never assailed Bentley after the *Tale of a Tub*. But Arbuthnot, another member of the Scriblerus Club, parodied Bentley's Horace and Phædrus in the *Miscellanies* of 1727; and published a supplement to *Gulliver's Travels*, describing "The State of Learning in the Empire of Lilliput." "Bullum is a tall, raw-boned man, I believe near six inches and

a half high; from his infancy he applied himself with great industry to the old Blefuscudian language, in which he made such a progress that he almost forgot his native Lilliputian"—an unlucky stroke, seeing that Bentley's command of English was one of his marked gifts. This, however, is characteristic of all the satire directed against Bentley by the literary men who allowed a criticism of taste, but treated a criticism of texts as soulless pedantry. There is plenty of banter, but not one point. And the cause is plain—they understood nothing of Bentley's work. Take Pope's extended satire in the fourth *Dunciad*. It is merely a series of variations, as brilliant and as thin as Thalberg's setting of "Home, sweet home," on the simple theme, "Dull Bentley." A small satellite of Pope, one David Mallet, wrote a "Poem on Verbal Criticism," in which he greets Bentley as "great eldest-born of Dulness!" Mallet deserves to be remembered with Garth.

In June, 1742, having completed eighty years and some months, Bentley was still able to examine for the Craven University Scholarships—when Christopher Smart was one of the successful competitors. A few weeks later the end came. His grandson tells it thus: "He was seized with a complaint" (pleuritic fever, it was said) "that in his opinion seemed to indicate a necessity of immediate bleeding; Dr. Heberden, then a young physician practising in Cambridge, was of a contrary opinion, and the patient acquiesced." Bentley died on July 14, 1742. Dr. Wallis, of Stamford—an old friend and adviser who was summoned, but arrived too late—said that the measure suggested by the sufferer was that which he himself would have taken.

Bentley was buried in the chapel of Trinity College, on the north side of the communion-rails. The Latin oration

then customary was pronounced by Philip Yonge, afterwards Public Orator, and Bishop of Norwich. The day of Bentley's funeral was that on which George Baker left Eton for King's College—the eminent physician to whom it was partly due that Cambridge became the University of Porson. The small square stone in the pavement of the College Chapel bears these words only:

H. S. E.
RICHARDUS BENTLEY S. T. P. R. [Sanctae Theologiae Professor Regius.]
Obiit XIV. Jul. 1742.
Ætatis 80.

The words *Magister Collegii* would naturally have been added to the second line; but in the view of those Fellows who acknowledged the judgment of April, 1738, the Mastership had since then been vacant. In the hall of the College, where many celebrated names are commemorated by the portraits on the walls, places of honour are assigned to Bacon, Barrow, Newton, and Bentley. The features of the great scholar speak with singular force from the canvas of Thornhill, who painted him in his forty-eighth year, the very year in which his struggle with the College began. That picture, Bentley's own bequest, is in the Master's Lodge. The pose of the head is haughty, almost defiant; the eyes, which are large, prominent, and full of bold vivacity, have a light in them as if Bentley were looking straight at an impostor whom he had detected, but who still amused him; the nose, strong and slightly tip-tilted, is moulded as if Nature had wished to show what a nose can do for the combined expression of scorn and sagacity; and the general effect of the countenance, at a first glance, is one which suggests power—frank, self-assured, sarcastic, and, I fear we must add, insolent: yet,

standing a little longer before the picture, we become aware of an essential kindness in those eyes of which the gaze is so direct and intrepid; we read in the whole face a certain keen veracity; and the sense grows—this was a man who could hit hard, but who would not strike a foul blow, and whose ruling instinct, whether always a sure guide or not, was to pierce through falsities to truth.

CHAPTER XIII.

BENTLEY'S PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF SCHOLARSHIP.

It will not be the object of these concluding pages to weigh Bentley's merits against those of any individual scholar in past or present times. The attempt, in such a case, to construct an order of merit amuses the competitive instinct of mankind, and may be an interesting exercise of private judgment, but presupposes a common measure for claims which are often, by their nature, incommensurable. A more useful task is to consider the nature of Bentley's place in that development of scholarship which extends from the fifteenth century to our own day. Caution may be needed to avoid drawing lines of a delusive sharpness between periods of which the characteristics rather melt into each other. The fact remains, however, that general tendencies were successively prevalent in a course which can be traced. And Bentley stands in a well-marked relation both to those who preceded and to those who followed him.

At his birth in 1662 rather more than two centuries had elapsed since the beginning of the movement which was to restore ancient literature to the modern world. During the earlier of these two centuries — from about 1450 to 1550 — the chief seat of the revival had been Italy, which thus retained by a new title that intellectual

primacy of Europe which had seemed on the point of passing from the lands of the South. Latin literature engrossed the early Italian scholars, who regarded themselves as literary heirs of Rome, restored to their rights after ages of dispossession. The beauty of classical form came as a surprise and a delight to these children of the middle age; they admired and enjoyed; they could not criticise. The more rhetorical parts of silver Latinity pleased them best; a preference natural to the Italian genius. And meanwhile Greek studies had remained in the background. The purest and most perfect examples of form—those which Greek literature affords—were not present to the mind of the earlier Renaissance. Transalpine students resorted to Italy as for initiation into sacred mysteries. The highest eminence in classical scholarship was regarded as a birthright of Italians. The small circle of immortals which included Poggio and Politian admitted only one foreigner, Erasmus, whose cosmopolitan tone gave no wound to the national susceptibility of Italians, and whose conception, though larger than theirs, rested on the same basis. That basis was the *imitatio veterum*, the literary reproduction of ancient form. Erasmus was nearer than any of his predecessors or contemporaries to the idea of a critical philology. His natural gifts for it are sufficiently manifest. But his want of critical method, and of the sense which requires it, appears in his edition of the Greek Testament.

In the second half of the sixteenth century a new period is opened by a Frenchman of Italian origin, Joseph Scaliger. Hitherto scholarship had been busy with the form of classical literature. The new effort is to comprehend the matter. By his Latin compositions and translations Scaliger is connected with the Italian age of Latin stylists.

But his most serious and characteristic work was the endeavour to frame a critical chronology of the ancient world. He was peculiarly well-fitted to effect a transition from the old to the new aim, because his industry could not be reproached with dulness. "People had thought that æsthetic pleasure could be purchased only at the cost of criticism," says Bernays; "now they saw the critical workshop itself lit up with the glow of artistic inspiration." A different praise belongs to Scaliger's great and indefatigable contemporary, Isaac Casaubon. His groans over Athenæus, which sometimes reverberate in the brilliant and faithful pages of Mr. Pattison, appear to warrant Casaubon's comparison of his toils to the labours of penal servitude ("*catenati in ergastulo labores*"). Bernhardy defines the merit of Casaubon as that of having been the first to popularise a connected knowledge of ancient life and manners. Two things had now been done. The charm of Latin style had been appreciated. The contents of ancient literature, both Latin and Greek, had been surveyed, and partly registered.

Bentley approached ancient literature on the side which had been chiefly cultivated in the age nearest to his own. When we first find him at work, under Stillingfleet's roof, or in the libraries of Oxford, he is evidently less occupied with the form than with the matter. He reads extensively, making indexes for his own use; he seeks to possess the contents of the classical authors, whether already printed or accessible only in manuscript. An incident told by Cumberland is suggestive. Bentley was talking one day with his favourite daughter, when she hinted a regret that he had devoted so much of his time to criticism, rather than to original composition. He acknowledged the justice of the remark. "But the wit and genius

of those old heathens," he said, "beguiled me: and as I despaired of raising myself up to their standard upon fair ground, I thought the only chance I had of looking over their heads was to get upon their shoulders." These are the words of a man who had turned to ancient literature in the spirit of Scaliger rather than in that of the Italian Latinists.

But in the Letter to Mill—when Bentley was only twenty-eight—we perceive that his wide reading had already made him alive to the necessity of a work which no previous scholar had thoroughly or successfully undertaken. This work was the purification of the classical texts. They were still deformed by a mass of errors which could not even be detected without the aid of accurate knowledge, grammatical and metrical. The great scholars before Bentley, with all their admirable merits, had in this respect resembled aeronauts, gazing down on a beautiful and varied country, in which, however, the pedestrian is liable to be stopped by broken bridges or quaking swamps. These difficulties of the ground, to which Bentley's patient march had brought him, engaged his *first* care. No care could hope to be successful—this he saw clearly—unless armed with the resources which previous scholarship had provided. The critic of a text should command the stylist's tact in language, and also the knowledge of the commentator. In the Latin preface to his edition of Horace, Bentley explains that his work is to be textual, illustrative; and then proceeds:

"All honour to the learned men who have expatiated in the field of commentary. They have done a most valuable work, which would now have to be done from the beginning, if they had not been beforehand; a work without which my reader cannot hope to pass the threshold of these present labours. That wide reading and erudi-

tion, that knowledge of all Greek and Latin antiquity, in which the commentaries have their very essence, are merely subordinate aids to textual criticism. A man should have all that at his fingers' ends, before he can venture, without insane rashness, to pass criticism on any ancient author. But, besides this, there is need of the keenest judgment, of sagacity and quickness, of a certain divining tact and inspiration (*divinandi quadam peritia et μαντικῇ*), as was said of Aristarchus—a faculty which can be acquired by no constancy of toil or length of life, but comes solely by the gift of nature and the happy star."

Let it be noted that Bentley's view is relative to his own day. It is because such men as Casaubon have gone before that he can thus define his own purpose. Learning, inspired by insight, is now to be directed to the attainment of textual accuracy. Bentley's distinction is not so much the degree of his insight—rare as this was—but rather his method of applying it. It might be said: Bentley turned the course of scholarship aside from grander objects, philosophical, historical, literary, and forced it into a narrow verbal groove. If Bentley's criticism had been verbal only—which it was not—such an objection would still be unjust. We in these days are accustomed to Greek and Latin texts which, though they may be still more or less unsound, are seldom so unsound as largely to obscure the author's meaning, or seriously to mar our enjoyment of his work as a work of art. But for this state of things we have mainly to thank the impulse given by Bentley.

In Bentley's time very many Latin authors, and nearly all Greek authors, were known only through texts teeming with every fault that could spring from a scribe's ignorance of grammar, metre, and sense. Suppose a piece of very bad English handwriting, full of erasures and corrections, sent to be printed at a foreign press. The for-

eign printer's first proof would be likely to contain some flagrant errors which a very slight acquaintance with our language would suffice to amend, and also many other errors which an Englishman could correct with more or less confidence, but in which a foreign corrector of the press would not even perceive anything amiss. In 1700 most of the classical texts, especially Greek, were very much what such a proof-sheet would be if only those flagrant errors had been removed which a very imperfect knowledge of English would reveal. Relatively to his contemporaries, Bentley might be compared with the Englishman of our supposed case, and his predecessors with the foreign correctors of the press.

Space fails for examples, but I may give one. An epigram of Callimachus begins thus:

> *τὴν ἁλίην Εὔδημος, ἐφ' ἧς ἅλα λιτὸν ἐπελθὼν*
> *χειμῶνας μεγάλους ἐξέφυγεν δανέων,*
> *θῆκε θεοῖς Σαμόθραξι.*

This had been taken to mean: "Eudemus dedicated to the Samothracian gods that ship on which, after crossing a smooth sea, he escaped from great storms [reading *Δαναῶν*] of the Danai;" *i. e.*, such storms as Æneas and his companions suffered; or perhaps, storms off the coast of the Troad. Bentley changed one letter (λ to *σ*, giving *ἐπέσθων*), and showed the true meaning: "Eudemus dedicated to the Samothracian gods that salt-cellar from which he ate frugal salt until he had escaped from the troublous waves of usury." Eudemus was not an adventurous mariner, but an impecunious person who had literally adopted the advice of the Greek sage—"Borrow from thyself by reducing thy diet"—and had gradually extricated himself from debt by living on bread and salt.

The pleader for large views of antiquity, who is inclined to depreciate the humbler tasks of verbal criticism,.. will allow that the frequency of such misapprehensions was calculated to confuse. It was not always, indeed, that Bentley drew the veil aside with so light a touch; but he has a reason to give. "I would have you remember, it is immeasurably more difficult to make emendations at this day (in 1711) than it was in former years. Those points which a mere collation of the manuscripts flashed or forced upon the mind have generally been seized and appropriated; and there is hardly anything left, save what is to be extracted, by insight alone, from the essence of the thought and the temper of the style. Hence, in my recension of Horace, I give more things on conjecture than through the help of manuscripts; and unless I am wholly deceived, conjecture has usually been the safer guide. Where readings vary, the very repute of the manuscript often misleads, and provokes the desire of change. But if a man is tempted to propose conjectures against the witness of all the manuscripts, Fear and Shame pluck him by the ear; his sole guides are reason — the light from the author's thoughts, and their constraining power. Suppose that one or two manuscripts furnish a reading which others discountenance. It is in vain that you demand belief for your one or two witnesses against a multitude, unless you bring as many arguments as would almost suffice to prove the point of themselves, without any manuscript testimony at all. Shake off, then, the exclusive reverence for scribes. Dare to have a mind of your own. Gauge each reading by the mould of the writer's expression and the stamp of his style; then, and not sooner, pronounce your verdict."

No school of textual criticism, however conservative, has

denied that conjecture is sometimes our sole resource. Bentley differs from the principles of more recent criticism chiefly in recognising less distinctly that conjecture should be the *last* resource. Great as was his tact in the use of manuscripts, he had, as a rule, too little of that respect for diplomatic evidence which appears, for instance, in Ritschl's remark that almost any manuscript will sometimes, however rarely, deserve more belief than we can give even to a conjecture which is intrinsically probable. The contrast, here, between Bentley's procedure and that of Casaubon—whose caution is often more in the spirit of modern textual science—may be illustrated by one example. Some verses of the poet Ion stood thus in the texts of the geographer Strabo:

> *Εὐβοΐδα μὲν γῆν λεπτὸς Εὐρίπου κλύδων*
> *Βοιωτίας ἐχώρισ' ἀκτῆς, ἐκτέμνων*
> *πρὸς Κρῆτα πορθμόν.*

When Casaubon had made the necessary change ἐκτεμών, he held his hand. "I can point out," said Casaubon, "that this place is corrupt; amend it I cannot, *without the help of manuscripts*." Not so Bentley: he confidently gives us, ἀκτὴν ἐκτεμὼν | προβλῆτα πορθμῷ. Now, if Casaubon was ineffectual, Bentley was precipitate. Nothing, surely, was needed but to shift Βοιωτίας from the beginning to the end of its verse. If we suppose that the words πρὸς Κρῆτα πορθμόν belonged to what precedes, and not (as is quite possible) to something now lost which followed, then we get a clear sense, expressed in a thoroughly classical form. "The narrow waters of the Euripus have parted Eubœa from the Bœotian shore, so shaping it (ἐκτεμών), that it looks toward the Cretan sea;" *i. e.*, the island of Euboea runs out in a S. E. S. direction. Ancient writers often de-

note *aspect* by naming a region, though distant and invisible, towards which a land looks. Thus Herodotus describes a part of the north Sicilian coast as that which "looks towards Tyrrhenia" (*πρὸς Τυρσηνίην τετραμμένη*). Milton imitates this device:

> "Where the great vision of the guarded Mount
> Looks towards Namancos and Bayona's hold."

I never understood how Milton came to write those lines till I thought of seeking a clue in Camden (of whom there is another trace in *Lycidas*); and he gave it. Speaking of the Cornish coast adjacent to St. Michael's Mount, Camden remarks, "there is no other place in this island that looks towards Spain." This fact was present to Milton's mind, and he wished to work it in; then he consulted Mercator's Atlas, where he found the town of Namancos marked near Cape Finisterre, and the Castle of Bayona also prominent; these gave him his ornate periphrasis for "Spain."

Though Bentley had little poetical taste, it was in poetry that he exercised his faculty of emendation, not only with most zest, but with most success. The reason is simple. Metre enabled Bentley to show a knowledge in which no predecessor had equalled him; it also supplied a framework which limited his rashness. In prose, his temerity was sometimes wanton. We have seen (chapter x.) how his *illa* would have swept *Itala* from the text of Augustine. One other instance may be given. Seneca compares a man who cannot keep his temper to one who cannot control his limbs. "Ægros scimus nervos esse, cum invitis nobis moventur. Senex aut infirmi corporis est, qui, cum ambulare vult, *currit*." "We know that something is wrong with our nerves, when they act against our will.

It is only an old man, or an invalid, who, when he means to walk, *runs*." By "*currit*," Seneca describes a well-known symptom of degeneration in the nervous system, which modern medical science terms "festination." "Now," says Bentley, "I do not see how this feeble person can show such agility. Clearly *currit* should be *corruit*. He tries to walk—and *tumbles down*. Bentley did not observe that the sentence just before proves "currit" to be right: "Speed is not to be desired," says Seneca, "unless it can be checked at our pleasure, . . . and reduced from a run to a walk" (a *cursu* ad gradum reduci). Of previous scholars, the best skilled in metre was Scaliger. Yet Scaliger's acquaintance with the metres of the *classical* age was by no means accurate; thus his anapæsts have the same fault as those of Buchanan and Grotius; and the iambic verses which he prefixed to his work *De Emendatione Temporum* have two metrical mistakes in four lines. While invariably mentioning Casaubon with the respect due to so great a name, Bentley has more than once occasion to indicate the false quantities which his conjectures involve. Thus a line of Sophocles, as given by Suidas, begins with the words πέπλους ("robes") τενίσαι. What is τενίσαι? Casaubon—followed by Meursius and by Gataker (one of the best English Hellenists before Bentley)—proposed κτενίσαι, "to comb" or "card." Pointing out that this will not do, since the second syllable must be long, Bentley restores πέπλους τε νῆσαι, "and to weave robes."

As a commentator, he deals chiefly, though not exclusively, with points of grammar or metre bearing on the criticism of the text. Here he has two merits, each in a high degree: he instructs and suggests. The notes on Horace and Manilius, for example, constantly fail to

persuade, but seldom fail to teach. It is to be wished that Bentley had written commentary, not merely in support of emendations, but continuously illustrating the language and matter of classical authors. If such a commentary had been added to his critical notes on Aristophanes, the whole must have been a great work. His power in *general* commentary is best seen in his treatment of particular points raised by his argument on the Letters of Phalaris. Take, for instance, his remarks on the Sophist's use of πρόνοια to mean "divine Providence," and of στοιχεῖον as "a natural element;" where he shows that, before Plato, the former was used only of human forecast, and the latter to denote a letter of the alphabet: or, again, his remark on such phrases as λέγεται, "it is said"—that Greek writers commonly use such phrases, not to intimate doubt, but, on the contrary, where the literary witnesses are more numerous than can conveniently be enumerated. Other comments are of yet larger scope. Thus, speaking of the fact that most ecclesiastical writers place the date of Pythagoras too low, he notices the need of allowing for a general disturbing cause—the tendency to represent Greek antiquity as more recent than Jewish. Answering the objection that a Greek comedy would not have admitted a glaring anachronism, Bentley reminds Boyle that, in one of these comedies, Hercules comes on the scene with his private tutor, who gives him his choice of several standard works, including Homer; but the young hero chooses a treatise on cookery which was popular in the dramatist's time. Some of Bentley's happiest comments of this kind occur in his reply to Anthony Collins, who in his "Discourse of Free-thinking" had appealed to the most eminent of the ancients. Here, for instance, is a remark on Cicero's philosophical dia-

logues. "In all the disputes he introduces between the various sects, after the speeches are ended, every man sticks where he was before; not one convert is made (as is common in modern dialogue), nor brought over in the smallest article. For he avoided that violation of decorum; he had observed, in common life, that all persevered in their sects, and maintained every nostrum without reserve."

Bentley's "higher criticism"—of ancient history, chronology, philosophy, literature—is mainly represented by the dissertation on Phalaris; but his calibre can also be estimated by his sketchy treatment of particular topics in the reply to Collins and in the Boyle Lectures. Of the scholars before Bentley, Usher and Selden might be partly compared with him in this province; but the only one, perhaps, who had built similar work on a comparable basis of classical learning was Scaliger. In Bentley's estimation, to judge by the tone of his references to Scaliger, no one stood higher. With all the differences between Bentley and Scaliger, there was this essential resemblance, that both men vivified great masses of learning by ardent, though dissimilar, genius:

> "Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus
> Mens agitat molem, et magno se in corpore miscet."

While Scaliger had constantly before him the conception of antiquity as a whole to be mentally grasped, Bentley's criticism rested on a knowledge more complete in detail; it was also conducted with a closer and more powerful logic. The fact which has told most against the popular diffusion of Bentley's fame is that he is so much greater than any one of his books. Probably many school-boys have passed through a stage of secretly wondering why

so much was thought of this Bentley, known to them only as the proposer of some rash emendations on Horace. Bentley's true greatness is not easily understood until his work has been surveyed in its entirety, with a clear sense of the time at which it was done; until the original learning and native power of his method are appreciated apart from the sometimes brilliant, sometimes faulty result; until, in short, the letter of his record is lit up for us by the living force of his character and mind.

What has been the nature of Bentley's influence on the subsequent course of scholarship? In the first place, it cannot be properly said that he founded a school. That phrase may express the relation of disciples to the master who has personally formed them, as Ruhnken belongs to the school of Hemsterhuys; or, where there has been no personal intercourse, it may denote the tradition of a well-defined scope or style; as the late Richard Shilleto (in his masterly edition of Demosthenes "On the Embassy," for instance) belongs to the school of Porson. Wolf said that if Cambridge had required Bentley to lecture on classics, he would probably have left a more distinct impress on some of those who came after him. Though the tone of Wolf's remark is more German than English, it applies with peculiar point to Bentley, in whom the scholar was before all things the man, and who often writes like one who would have preferred to speak. But neither thus, nor by set models of literary achievement, did Bentley create anything so definite—or so narrow—as a school. Goethe used the word "daemonic" to describe a power of mind over mind which eludes natural analysis, but seems to involve a peculiar union of keen insight with moral self-reliance. In the sphere of scholarship, the influence which Bentley's spirit has exerted through his writings might be

called a great "daemonic" energy, a force which cannot be measured—like that, for instance, of Porson—by the positive effect of particular discoveries; a force which operates not only by the written letter, but also, and more widely still, by suggestion, stimulus, inspiration, almost as vivid as could be communicated by the voice, the countenance, the apprehended nature of a present teacher.

Bentley's influence has flowed in two main streams—the historical and literary criticism of classical antiquity, as best seen in the dissertation on Phalaris; the verbal criticism, as seen in his work on classical texts. Holland, and then Germany, received both currents. Wolf's inquiry into the origin of the Homeric poems, Niebuhr's examination of Roman legends, are the efforts of a criticism to which Bentley's dissertation on Phalaris gave the first pattern of method. On the other hand, Hermann's estimate of Bentley's Terence is one of the earlier testimonies to the effect which Bentley's verbal criticism had exercised; and Professor Nettleship has told us that the late Maurice Haupt, in his lectures at Berlin on the Epistles of Horace, ranked Bentley second to no other scholar. We, Bentley's countrymen, have felt his influence chiefly in the way of textual criticism. The historical and literary criticism by which he stimulated such men as Wolf was comparatively unappreciated in England until its effects returned upon this country from Germany. Bunsen could justly say, "Historical philology is the discovery of Bentley—the heritage and glory of German learning." At Cambridge, Bentley's home—where Markland, Wasse, and John Taylor had known him personally—it was natural that the contemporary view of his merits should be coloured by his own estimate; and he considered verbal emendation as his own forte. This opinion prevailed in

the Cambridge tradition, which from Markland and Taylor passed into the school of Porson. It was in vain that Richard Dawes disparaged Bentley's textual criticism. Warburton and Lowth were more successful in prejudicing English opinion against other aspects of his work. That his labours on the Greek Testament were so little known in England from his death to Lachmann's time, is chiefly due to the fact (noticed by Tregelles) that Bishop Marsh, in translating Michaelis, omitted the passage relating to Bentley. But while English recognition was thus limited, Holland honoured him by the mouths of Ruhnken and Valckenaer. And the memoir of Bentley by F. A. Wolf may be regarded as registering an estimate which Germany has not essentially altered.

The place of Bentley in literature primarily depends on the fact that he represents England among a few great scholars, of various countries, who helped to restore classical learning in Europe. Nor is he merely one among them; he is one with whom an epoch begins. Erasmus marks the highest point reached in the sixteenth century by the genial study of antiquity on its literary side. Scaliger expresses the effort, at once erudite and artistic, to comprehend antiquity as a whole in the light of verified history. Casaubon embodies the devoted endeavour to comprehend ancient society in the light of its recorded manners, without irradiating or disturbing the effect by any play of personal thought or feeling. With Bentley that large conception of antiquity on the "real" side is still present, but as a condition tacitly presupposed, not as the evident guide of his immediate task. He feels the greatness of his predecessors as it could be felt only by their peer, but sees that the very foundations on which they built—the classical books themselves—must be ren-

dered sound, if the edifice is to be upheld or completed. He does not disparage that "higher" criticism in which his own powers were so signally proved; rather his object is to establish it firmly on the only basis which can securely support it, the basis of ascertained texts. His labours were fruitful both in Greek and in Latin. However we may estimate his felicity in the two languages respectively, it cannot be said that he gave to either a clear preference over the other.

This is distinctive of his position relatively to the general course of subsequent scholarship. During the latter part of the eighteenth century several causes conspired to fix attention upon Greek. The elastic freedom of the Greek language and literature, of Greek action and art, was congenial to the spirit of that time, insurgent as it was against traditional authority, and impatient to find a reasonable order of life by a return to nature. Wolf, in 1795, touched a chord which vibrated throughout Europe when he claimed the Iliad and the Odyssey as groups of songs which in a primitive age had spoken directly to the hearts of the people. His theory, raising a host of special questions, stimulated research in the whole range of that matchless literature which begins with Homer. The field of Greek studies, as compared with Latin, was still comparatively fresh. Latin had long been familiar as the language which scholars wrote, or even spoke; and the further progress of Latin learning was delayed by the belief that there was little more to learn. Greek, on the other hand, attracted acute minds not only by its intrinsic charm, but by the hope of discovery; the Greek scholar, like the Greek sailor of old, was attended by visions of treasures that might await him in the region of the sunset.

Porson was born in 1759 and died in 1808. In his life-

time, and for more than a generation after his death, scholars were principally occupied with Greek. Amongst many eminent names, it would be enough to mention Wyttenbach, Brunck, Hermann, Boeckh, Lobeck, Bekker, Elmsley, Dobree, Blomfield, Gaisford, Thirlwall. In Latin scholarship, Heyne's Virgil was perhaps the most considerable performance of Porson's day. Then Niebuhr arose, and turned new currents of interest towards Rome. His examination of early Roman tradition did much the same work for Latin which Wolf's Homeric theory had done for Greek. Ideas of startling novelty stimulated the critical study of a whole literature; and the value of the impulse was independent of the extent to which the ideas themselves were sound. Niebuhr's thoughts, like Wolf's, were given to the world in a propitious hour. Wolf broached views welcome to the mind of the Revolution; Niebuhr proposed a complex problem of fascinating interest at a moment when intellectual pursuits were resumed with a new zest after the exhaustion of the Napoleonic wars. And then, at no long interval, came the works which may be regarded as fundamental in the recent Latin philology—those of Lachmann, Ritschl, Mommsen.

Bentley's name is the last of first-rate magnitude which occurs above the point at which Greek and Latin studies begin to diverge. His critical method, his pregnant ideas have influenced the leaders of progress in both fields. Wolf's memoir of Bentley has been mentioned. Niebuhr also speaks of him as towering like a giant amidst a generation of dwarfs. His genius was recognised by Ritschl as by Porson. It is still possible to ask, Was Bentley stronger in Greek or in Latin? I have heard a very eminent scholar say—in Latin: the general voice would probably say—in Greek; and this is hardly disputable, if our

test is to be success in textual criticism. Bentley has given few, if any, Latin emendations so good as his best on Aristophanes, Callimachus, Nicander, and some other Greek authors. Yet the statement needs to be guarded and explained. In Bentley's time, Latin studies were more advanced than Greek. Bentley's emendations, as a general rule, are best when the text is worst. The Greek texts, in which the first harvest had not yet been reaped, offered him a better field than the Latin. His personal genius, with its vivacity somewhat impatient of formula, was also more Greek than Latin; his treatment of Greek usually seems more sympathetic; but it might be doubted whether his positive knowledge of the Latin language and literature was inferior. If it is said that there are flaws in his Latin prose, it may be replied that we have none of his Greek prose.

The gain of scholarship during the last fifty years has been chiefly in three provinces — study of manuscripts, study of inscriptions, and comparative philology. The direct importance of archæology for classical learning has of late years been winning fuller recognition—to the advantage of both. In Bentley's time no one of these four studies had yet become scientific. That very fact best illustrates the calibre of the man who, a century and a half ago, put forth principles of textual criticism afterwards adopted by Lachmann; merited the title, "first of critics," from such an editor of Greek inscriptions as Boeckh; divined the presence of the digamma in the text of Homer; treated an obscure branch of numismatics with an insight which the most recent researches, aided by new resources, recognise as extraordinary. Bentley's qualities, mental and moral, fitted him to be a pioneer over a wide region, rather than, like Porson, the per-

fect cultivator of a limited domain; Bentley cleared new ground, made new paths, opened new perspectives, ranged through the length and breadth of ancient literature as Hercules, in the *Trachiniae* of Sophocles, claims to have roamed through Hellas, sweeping from hill, lake, and forest those monstrous forms before which superstition had quailed, or which helpless apathy had suffered to infest the dark places of the land.

Probably the study of classical antiquity, in the largest sense, has never been more really vigorous than it is at the present day. If so, it is partly because that study relies no longer upon a narrow or exclusive prescription, but upon a reasonable perception of its proper place amongst the studies which belong to a liberal education; and because the diffusion of that which is specially named science has at the same time spread abroad the only spirit in which any kind of knowledge can be prosecuted to a result of lasting intellectual value. Whilst every year tends to refine the subdivision of labour in that vast field, Bentley's work teaches a simple lesson which is still applicable to every part of it. The literary activity of the present day has multiplied attractive facilities for becoming acquainted with the ancient classics at second-hand. Every sensible person will rejoice that such facilities exist; they are excellent in their own way. Only it is important not to forget the difference between the knowledge at second-hand and the knowledge at first-hand, whether regard is had to the educational effect of the process, or to the worth of the acquisition, or to the hope of further advance. Even with a Bentley's power, a Bentley could have been made only by his method—by his devoted and systematic study, not of books about the classics, but of the classical texts themselves; by test-

ing, at each step, his comprehension of what he read; by not allowing the mere authority of tradition to supersede the free exercise of independent judgment; and by always remembering that the very right of such judgment to independence must rest on the patience, the intelligence, the completeness with which the tradition itself has been surveyed.

THE END.

COWPER

BY

GOLDWIN SMITH

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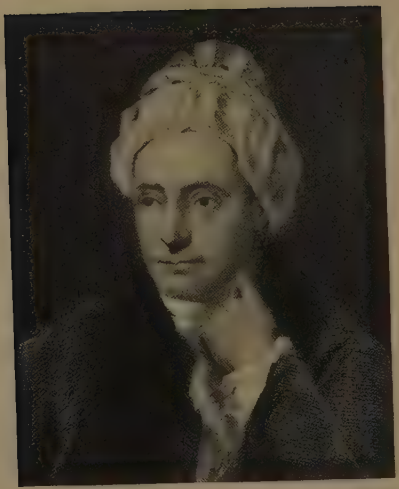
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COWPER.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE.

Cowper is the most important English poet of the period between Pope and the illustrious group headed by Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley, which arose out of the intellectual ferment of the European Revolution. As a reformer of poetry, who called it back from conventionality to nature, and at the same time as the teacher of a new school of sentiment which acted as a solvent upon the existing moral and social system, he may perhaps himself be numbered among the precursors of the Revolution, though he was certainly the mildest of them all. As a sentimentalist he presents a faint analogy to Rousseau, whom in natural temperament he somewhat resembled. He was also the great poet of the religious revival which marked the latter part of the eighteenth century in England, and which was called Evangelicism within the establishment, and Methodism without. In this way he is associated with Wesley and Whitefield, as well as with the philanthropists of the movement, such as Wilberforce, Thornton, and Clarkson. As a poet he touches, on different sides of his character, Goldsmith, Crabbe, and

Burns. With Goldsmith and Crabbe he shares the honour of improving English taste in the sense of truthfulness and simplicity. To Burns he felt his affinity, across a gulf of social circumstance, and in spite of a dialect not yet made fashionable by Scott. Besides his poetry, he holds a high, perhaps the highest place, among English letter-writers; and the collection of his letters appended to Southey's biography forms, with the biographical portions of his poetry, the materials for a sketch of his life. Southey's biography itself is very helpful, though too prolix and too much filled out with dissertations for common readers. Had its author only done for Cowper what he did for Nelson![1]

William Cowper came of the Whig nobility of the robe. His great-uncle, after whom he was named, was the Whig Lord Chancellor of Anne and George I. His grandfather was that Spencer Cowper, judge of the Common Pleas, for love of whom the pretty Quakeress drowned herself, and who, by the rancour of party, was indicted for her murder. His father, the Rev. John Cowper, D.D., was chaplain to George II. His mother was a Donne, of the race of the poet, and descended by several lines from Henry III. A Whig and a gentleman he was by birth, a Whig and a gentleman he remained to the end. He was born on the 15th November (old style), 1731, in his father's rectory of Berkhampstead. From nature he received, with a large measure of the gifts of genius, a still larger measure of its painful sensibilities. In his portrait by Romney the brow bespeaks intellect, the features feeling and refinement, the eye madness. The stronger parts of character, the combative and propelling forces, he evi-

[1] Our acknowledgments are also due to Mr. Benham, the writer of the Memoir prefixed to the Globe Edition of Cowper.

dently lacked from the beginning. For the battle of life he was totally unfit. His judgment in its healthy state was, even on practical questions, sound enough, as his letters abundantly prove; but his sensibility not only rendered him incapable of wrestling with a rough world, but kept him always on the verge of madness, and frequently plunged him into it. To the malady which threw him out of active life we owe not the meanest of English poets.

At the age of thirty-two, writing of himself, he says, "I am of a very singular temper, and very unlike all the men that I have ever conversed with. Certainly I am not an absolute fool, but I have more weakness than the greatest of all the fools I can recollect at present. In short, if I was as fit for the next world as I am unfit for this—and God forbid I should speak it in vanity — I would not change conditions with any saint in Christendom." Folly produces nothing good, and if Cowper had been an absolute fool, he would not have written good poetry. But he does not exaggerate his own weakness, and that he should have become a power among men is a remarkable triumph of the influences which have given birth to Christian civilization.

The world into which the child came was one very adverse to him, and at the same time very much in need of him. It was a world from which the spirit of poetry seemed to have fled. There could be no stronger proof of this than the occupation of the throne of Spenser, Shakspeare, and Milton by the arch-versifier Pope. The Revolution of 1688 was glorious, but unlike the Puritan Revolution which it followed, and in the political sphere partly ratified, it was profoundly prosaic. Spiritual religion, the source of Puritan grandeur and of the poetry of

Milton, was almost extinct; there was not much more of it among the Nonconformists, who had now become to a great extent mere Whigs, with a decided Unitarian tendency. The Church was little better than a political force, cultivated and manipulated by political leaders for their own purposes. The Bishops were either politicians or theological polemics collecting trophies of victory over free-thinkers as titles to higher preferment. The inferior clergy, as a body, were far nearer in character to Trulliber than to Dr. Primrose; coarse, sordid, neglectful of their duties, shamelessly addicted to sinecurism and pluralities, fanatics in their Toryism and in attachment to their corporate privileges, cold, rationalistic and almost heathen in their preachings, if they preached at all. The society of the day is mirrored in the pictures of Hogarth, in the works of Fielding and Smollett; hard and heartless polish was the best of it; and not a little of it was *Marriage à la Mode*. Chesterfield, with his soulless culture, his court graces, and his fashionable immoralities, was about the highest type of an English gentleman; but the Wilkeses, Potters, and Sandwiches, whose mania for vice culminated in the Hell-fire Club, were more numerous than the Chesterfields. Among the country squires, for one Allworthy or Sir Roger de Coverley there were many Westerns. Among the common people religion was almost extinct, and assuredly no new morality or sentiment, such as Positivists now promise, had taken its place. Sometimes the rustic thought for himself, and scepticism took formal possession of his mind; but, as we see from one of Cowper's letters, it was a coarse scepticism which desired to be buried with its hounds. Ignorance and brutality reigned in the cottage. Drunkenness reigned in palace and cottage alike. Gambling, cock-fighting, and bull-fighting were the

amusements of the people. Political life, which, if it had been pure and vigorous, might have made up for the absence of spiritual influences, was corrupt from the top of the scale to the bottom: its effect on national character is pourtrayed in Hogarth's *Election*. That property had its duties as well as its rights, nobody had yet ventured to say or think. The duty of a gentleman towards his own class was to pay his debts of honour and to fight a duel whenever he was challenged by one of his own order; towards the lower class his duty was none. Though the forms of government were elective, and Cowper gives us a description of the candidate at election-time obsequiously soliciting votes, society was intensely aristocratic, and each rank was divided from that below it by a sharp line which precluded brotherhood or sympathy. Says the Duchess of Buckingham to Lady Huntingdon, who had asked her to come and hear Whitefield, "I thank your ladyship for the information concerning the Methodist preachers; their doctrines are most repulsive, and strongly tinctured with disrespect towards their superiors, in perpetually endeavouring to level all ranks and do away with all distinctions. It is monstrous to be told you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth. This is highly offensive and insulting; and I cannot but wonder that your ladyship should relish any sentiments so much at variance with high rank and good breeding. I shall be most happy to come and hear your favourite preacher." Her Grace's sentiments towards the common wretches that crawl on the earth were shared, we may be sure, by her Grace's waiting-maid. Of humanity there was as little as there was of religion. It was the age of the criminal law which hanged men for petty thefts, of life-long imprisonment for debt, of the stocks and the pil-

lory, of a Temple Bar garnished with the heads of traitors, of the unreformed prison system, of the press-gang, of unrestrained tyranny and savagery at public schools. That the slave-trade was iniquitous, hardly any one suspected; even men who deemed themselves religious took part in it without scruple. But a change was at hand, and a still mightier change was in prospect. At the time of Cowper's birth, John Wesley was twenty-eight, and Whitefield was seventeen. With them the revival of religion was at hand. Johnson, the moral reformer, was twenty-two. Howard was born, and in less than a generation Wilberforce was to come.

When Cowper was six years old his mother died; and seldom has a child, even such a child, lost more, even in a mother. Fifty years after her death he still thinks of her, he says, with love and tenderness every day. Late in his life his cousin, Mrs. Anne Bodham, recalled herself to his remembrance by sending him his mother's picture. "Every creature," he writes, "that has any affinity to my mother is dear to me, and you, the daughter of her brother, are but one remove distant from her; I love you therefore, and love you much, both for her sake and for your own. The world could not have furnished you with a present so acceptable to me as the picture which you have so kindly sent me. I received it the night before last, and received it with a trepidation of nerves and spirits somewhat akin to what I should have felt had its dear original presented herself to my embraces. I kissed it, and hung it where it is the last object which I see at night, and the first on which I open my eyes in the morning. She died when I completed my sixth year; yet I remember her well, and am an ocular witness of the great fidelity of the copy. I remember, too, a multitude of the maternal tendernesses which I received from her, and which have endeared her

memory to me beyond expression. There is in me, I believe, more of the Donne than of the Cowper, and though I love all of both names, and have a thousand reasons to love those of my own name, yet I feel the bond of nature draw me vehemently to your side." As Cowper never married, there was nothing to take the place in his heart which had been left vacant by his mother.

"My mother! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unfelt, a kiss;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah, that maternal smile!—it answers—Yes.
I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more!
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
What ardently I wish'd, I long believed,
And disappointed still, was still deceived;
By expectation every day beguiled,
Dupe of to-morrow even from a child.
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrows spent,
I learn'd at last submission to my lot,
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot."

In the years that followed no doubt he remembered her too well. At six years of age this little mass of timid and

quivering sensibility was, in accordance with the cruel custom of the time, sent to a large boarding-school. The change from home to a boarding-school is bad enough now; it was much worse in those days.

"I had hardships," says Cowper, "of various kinds to conflict with, which I felt more sensibly in proportion to the tenderness with which I had been treated at home. But my chief affliction consisted in my being singled out from all the other boys by a lad of about fifteen years of age as a proper object upon whom he might let loose the cruelty of his temper. I choose to conceal a particular recital of the many acts of barbarity with which he made it his business continually to persecute me. It will be sufficient to say that his savage treatment of me impressed such a dread of his figure upon my mind, that I well remember being afraid to lift my eyes upon him higher than to his knees, and that I knew him better by his shoe-buckles than by any other part of his dress. May the Lord pardon him, and may we meet in glory!" Cowper charges himself, it may be in the exaggerated style of a self-accusing saint, with having become at school an adept in the art of lying. Southey says this must be a mistake, since at English public schools boys do not learn to lie. But the mistake is on Southey's part; bullying, such as this child endured, while it makes the strong boys tyrants, makes the weak boys cowards, and teaches them to defend themselves by deceit, the fist of the weak. The recollection of this boarding-school mainly it was that at a later day inspired the plea for a home education in *Tirocinium*.

> "Then why resign into a stranger's hand
> A task as much within your own command,
> That God and nature, and your interest too,
> Seem with one voice to delegate to you?

Why hire a lodging in a house unknown
For one whose tenderest thoughts all hover round your own?
This second weaning, needless as it is,
How does it lacerate both your heart and his!
The indented stick that loses day by day
Notch after notch, till all are smooth'd away,
Bears witness long ere his dismission come,
With what intense desire he wants his home.
But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof
Bid fair enough to answer in the proof,
Harmless, and safe, and natural as they are,
A disappointment waits him even there:
Arrived, he feels an unexpected change,
He blushes, hangs his head, is shy and strange.
No longer takes, as once, with fearless ease,
His favourite stand between his father's knees,
But seeks the corner of some distant seat,
And eyes the door, and watches a retreat,
And, least familiar where he should be most,
Feels all his happiest privileges lost.
Alas, poor boy!—the natural effect
Of love by absence chill'd into respect."

From the boarding-school, the boy, his eyes being liable to inflammation, was sent to live with an oculist, in whose house he spent two years, enjoying at all events a respite from the sufferings and the evils of the boarding-school. He was then sent to Westminster School, at that time in its glory. That Westminster in those days must have been a scene not merely of hardship, but of cruel suffering and degradation to the younger and weaker boys, has been proved by the researches of the Public Schools Commission. There was an established system and a regular vocabulary of bullying. Yet Cowper seems not to have

been so unhappy there as at the private school; he speaks of himself as having excelled at cricket and football; and excellence in cricket and football at a public school generally carries with it, besides health and enjoyment, not merely immunity from bullying, but high social consideration. With all Cowper's delicacy and sensitiveness, he must have had a certain fund of physical strength, or he could hardly have borne the literary labour of his later years, especially as he was subject to the medical treatment of a worse than empirical era. At one time he says, while he was at Westminster, his spirits were so buoyant that he fancied he should never die, till a skull thrown out before him by a grave-digger as he was passing through St. Margaret's churchyard in the night recalled him to a sense of his mortality.

The instruction at a public school in those days was exclusively classical. Cowper was under Vincent Bourne, his portrait of whom is in some respects a picture not only of its immediate subject, but of the school-master of the last century. "I love the memory of Vinny Bourne. I think him a better Latin poet than Tibullus, Propertius, Ausonius, or any of the writers in his way, except Ovid, and not at all inferior to him. I love him too with a love of partiality, because he was usher of the fifth form at Westminster when I passed through it. He was so good-natured and so indolent that I lost more than I got by him, for he made me as idle as himself. He was such a sloven, as if he had trusted to his genius as a cloak for everything that could disgust you in his person; and indeed in his writings he has almost made amends for all. . . . I remember seeing the Duke of Richmond set fire to his greasy locks, and box his ears to put it out again." Cowper learned, if not to write Latin verses as well as Vinny

Bourne himself, to write them very well, as his Latin versions of some of his own short poems bear witness. Not only so, but he evidently became a good classical scholar, as classical scholarship was in those days, and acquired the literary form of which the classics are the best school. Out of school hours he studied independently, as clever boys under the unexacting rule of the old public schools often did, and read through the whole of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* with a friend. He also, probably, picked up at Westminster much of the little knowledge of the world which he ever possessed. Among his school-fellows was Warren Hastings, in whose guilt as proconsul he afterwards, for the sake of Auld Lang Syne, refused to believe, and Impey, whose character has had the ill-fortune to be required as the shade in Macaulay's fancy picture of Hastings.

On leaving Westminster, Cowper, at eighteen, went to live with Mr. Chapman, an attorney, to whom he was articled, being destined for the Law. He chose that profession, he says, not of his own accord, but to gratify an indulgent father, who may have been led into the error by a recollection of the legal honours of the family, as well as by the "silver pence" which his promising son had won by his Latin verses at Westminster School. The youth duly slept at the attorney's house in Ely Place. His days were spent in "giggling and making giggle" with his cousins, Theodora and Harriet, the daughters of Ashley Cowper, in the neighbouring Southampton Row. Ashley Cowper was a very little man, in a white hat lined with yellow, and his nephew used to say that he would one day be picked by mistake for a mushroom. His fellow-clerk in the office, and his accomplice in giggling and making giggle, was one strangely mated with him; the strong, as-

piring, and unscrupulous Thurlow, who, though fond of pleasure, was at the same time preparing himself to push his way to wealth and power. Cowper felt that Thurlow would reach the summit of ambition, while he would himself remain below, and made his friend promise when he was Chancellor to give him something. When Thurlow was Chancellor, he gave Cowper his advice on translating Homer.

At the end of his three years with the attorney, Cowper took chambers in the Middle, from which he afterwards removed to the Inner Temple. The Temple is now a pile of law offices. In those days it was still a Society. One of Cowper's set says of it: "The Temple is the barrier that divides the City and Suburbs; and the gentlemen who reside there seem influenced by the situation of the place they inhabit. Templars are in general a kind of citizen courtiers. They aim at the air and the mien of the drawing-room; but the holy-day smoothness of a 'prentice, heightened with some additional touches of the rake or coxcomb, betrays itself in everything they do. The Temple, however, is stocked with its peculiar beaux, wits, poets, critics, and every character in the gay world; and it is a thousand pities that so pretty a society should be disgraced with a few dull fellows, who can submit to puzzle themselves with cases and reports, and have not taste enough to follow the genteel method of studying the law." Cowper, at all events, studied law by the genteel method; he read it almost as little in the Temple as he had in the attorney's office, though in due course of time he was formally called to the Bar, and even managed in some way to acquire a reputation which, when he had entirely given up the profession, brought him a curious offer of a readership at Lyons Inn. His time was given to lit-

erature, and he became a member of a little circle of men of letters and journalists which had its social centre in the Nonsense Club, consisting of seven Westminster men who dined together every Thursday. In the set were Bonnell Thornton and Colman, twin wits; fellow-writers of the periodical essays which were the rage in that day; joint proprietors of the *St. James's Chronicle;* contributors both of them to the *Connoisseur;* and translators, Colman of Terence, Bonnell Thornton of Plautus, Colman being a dramatist besides. In the set was Lloyd, another wit and essayist and a poet, with a character not of the best. On the edge of the set, but apparently not in it, was Churchill, who was then running a course which to many seemed meteoric, and of whose verse, sometimes strong but always turbid, Cowper conceived and retained an extravagant admiration. Churchill was a link to Wilkes; Hogarth, too, was an ally of Colman, and helped him in his exhibition of Signs. The set was strictly confined to Westminsters. Gray and Mason, being Etonians, were objects of its literary hostility, and butts of its satire. It is needless to say much about these literary companions of Cowper's youth; his intercourse with them was totally broken off; and before he himself became a poet its effects had been obliterated by madness, entire change of mind, and the lapse of twenty years. If a trace remained, it was in his admiration of Churchill's verses, and in the general results of literary society, and of early practice in composition. Cowper contributed to the *Connoisseur* and the *St. James's Chronicle.* His papers in the *Connoisseur* have been preserved; they are mainly imitations of the lighter papers of the *Spectator* by a student who affects the man of the world. He also dallied with poetry, writing verses to "Delia," and an epistle to Lloyd. He had translated an

elegy of Tibullus when he was fourteen, and at Westminster he had written an imitation of Phillips's *Splendid Shilling*, which, Southey says, shows his manner formed. He helped his Cambridge brother, John Cowper, in a translation of the *Henriade*. He kept up his classics, especially his Homer. In his letters there are proofs of his familiarity with Rousseau. Two or three ballads which he wrote are lost, but he says they were popular, and we may believe him. Probably they were patriotic. "When poor Bob White," he says, "brought in the news of Boscawen's success off the coast of Portugal, how did I leap for joy! When Hawke demolished Conflans, I was still more transported. But nothing could express my rapture when Wolfe made the conquest of Quebec."

The "Delia" to whom Cowper wrote verses was his cousin Theodora, with whom he had an unfortunate love affair. Her father, Ashley Cowper, forbade their marriage, nominally on the ground of consanguinity; really, as Southey thinks, because he saw Cowper's unfitness for business, and inability to maintain a wife. Cowper felt the disappointment deeply at the time, as well he might do if Theodora resembled her sister, Lady Hesketh. Theodora remained unmarried, and, as we shall see, did not forget her lover. His letters she preserved till her death in extreme old age.

In 1756 Cowper's father died. There does not seem to have been much intercourse between them, nor does the son in after-years speak with any deep feeling of his loss: possibly his complaint in *Tirocinium* of the effect of boarding-schools, in estranging children from their parents, may have had some reference to his own case. His local affections, however, were very strong, and he felt with unusual keenness the final parting from his old home, and the pang

of thinking that strangers usurp our dwelling and the familiar places will know us no more.

> "Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
> Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
> And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
> Drew me to school along the public way,
> Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapp'd
> In scarlet mantle warm and velvet capp'd.
> 'Tis now become a history little known,
> That once we call'd the pastoral house our own."

Before the rector's death, it seems, his pen had hardly realized the cruel frailty of the tenure by which a home in a parsonage is held. Of the family of Burkhampstead Rectory there was now left besides himself only his brother John Cowper, Fellow of Caius College, Cambridge, whose birth had cost their mother's life.

When Cowper was thirty-two, and still living in the Temple, came the sad and decisive crisis of his life. He went mad, and attempted suicide. What was the source of his madness? There is a vague tradition that it arose from licentiousness, which, no doubt, is sometimes the cause of insanity. But in Cowper's case there is no proof of anything of the kind: his confessions, after his conversion, of his own past sinfulness point to nothing worse than general ungodliness and occasional excess in wine; and the tradition derives a colour of probability only from the loose lives of one or two of the wits and Bohemians with whom he had lived. His virtuous love of Theodora was scarcely compatible with low and gross amours. Generally, his madness is said to have been religious, and the blame is laid on the same foe to human weal as that of the sacrifice of Iphigenia. But when he first went mad, his conversion

to Evangelicism had not taken place; he had not led a particularly religious life, nor been greatly given to religious practices, though as a clergyman's son he naturally believed in religion, had at times felt religious emotions, and when he found his heart sinking had tried devotional books and prayers. The truth is, his malady was simple hypochondria, having its source in delicacy of constitution and weakness of digestion, combined with the influence of melancholy surroundings. It had begun to attack him soon after his settlement in his lonely chambers in the Temple, when his pursuits and associations, as we have seen, were far from Evangelical. When its crisis arrived, he was living by himself without any society of the kind that suited him (for the excitement of the Nonsense Club was sure to be followed by reaction); he had lost his love, his father, his home, and, as it happened, also a dear friend; his little patrimony was fast dwindling away; he must have despaired of success in his profession; and his outlook was altogether dark. It yielded to the remedies to which hypochondria usually yields—air, exercise, sunshine, cheerful society, congenial occupation. It came with January and went with May. Its gathering gloom was dispelled for a time by a stroll in fine weather on the hills above Southampton Water, and Cowper said that he was never unhappy for a whole day in the company of Lady Hesketh. When he had become a Methodist, his hypochondria took a religious form, but so did his recovery from hypochondria; both must be set down to the account of his faith, or neither. This double aspect of the matter will plainly appear further on. A votary of wealth, when his brain gives way under disease or age, fancies that he is a beggar. A Methodist, when his brain gives way under the same influences, fancies that he is for-

saken of God. In both cases the root of the malady is physical.

In the lines which Cowper sent on his disappointment to Theodora's sister, and which record the sources of his despondency, there is not a touch of religious despair, or of anything connected with religion. The catastrophe was brought on by an incident with which religion had nothing to do. The office of clerk of the Journals in the House of Lords fell vacant, and was in the gift of Cowper's kinsman, Major Cowper, as patentee. Cowper received the nomination. He had longed for the office sinfully, as he afterwards fancied; it would exactly have suited him, and made him comfortable for life. But his mind had by this time succumbed to his malady. His fancy conjured up visions of opposition to the appointment in the House of Lords; of hostility in the office where he had to study the Journals; of the terrors of an examination to be undergone before the frowning peers. After hopelessly poring over the Journals for some months he became quite mad, and his madness took a suicidal form. He has told with unsparing exactness the story of his attempts to kill himself. In his youth his father had unwisely given him a treatise in favour of suicide to read, and when he argued against it, had listened to his reasonings in a silence which he construed as sympathy with the writer, though it seems to have been only unwillingness to think too badly of the state of a departed friend. This now recurred to his mind, and talk with casual companions in taverns and chop-houses was enough in his present condition to confirm him in his belief that self-destruction was lawful. Evidently he was perfectly insane, for he could not take up a newspaper without reading in it a fancied libel on himself. First he bought laudanum, and had gone out into the

fields with the intention of swallowing it, when the love of life suggested another way of escaping the dreadful ordeal. He might sell all he had, fly to France, change his religion, and bury himself in a monastery. He went home to pack up; but while he was looking over his portmanteau, his mood changed, and he again resolved on self-destruction. Taking a coach, he ordered the coachman to drive to the Tower Wharf, intending to throw himself into the river. But the love of life once more interposed, under the guise of a low tide and a porter seated on the quay. Again in the coach, and afterwards in his chambers, he tried to swallow the laudanum; but his hand was paralysed by "the convincing Spirit," aided by seasonable interruptions from the presence of his laundress and her husband, and at length he threw the laudanum away. On the night before the day appointed for the examination before the Lords, he lay some time with the point of his penknife pressed against his heart, but without courage to drive it home. Lastly, he tried to hang himself; and on this occasion he seems to have been saved not by the love of life, or by want of resolution, but by mere accident. He had become insensible, when the garter by which he was suspended broke, and his fall brought in the laundress, who supposed him to be in a fit. He sent her to a friend, to whom he related all that had passed, and despatched him to his kinsman. His kinsman arrived, listened with horror to the story, made more vivid by the sight of the broken garter, saw at once that all thought of the appointment was at end, and carried away the instrument of nomination. Let those whom despondency assails read this passage of Cowper's life, and remember that he lived to write *John Gilpin* and *The Task*.

Cowper tells us that "to this moment he had felt no

concern of a spiritual kind;" that "ignorant of original sin, insensible of the guilt of actual transgression, he understood neither the Law nor the Gospel; the condemning nature of the one, nor the restoring mercies of the other." But after attempting suicide he was seized, as he well might be, with religious horrors. Now it was that he began to ask himself whether he had been guilty of the unpardonable sin, and was presently persuaded that he had, though it would be vain to inquire what he imagined the unpardonable sin to be. In this mood, he fancied that if there was any balm for him in Gilead, it would be found in the ministrations of his friend Martin Madan, an Evangelical clergyman of high repute, whom he had been wont to regard as an enthusiast. His Cambridge brother, John, the translator of the *Henriade*, seems to have had some philosophic doubts as to the efficacy of the proposed remedy; but, like a philosopher, he consented to the experiment. Mr. Madan came and ministered, but in that distempered soul his balm turned to poison; his religious conversations only fed the horrible illusion. A set of English Sapphics, written by Cowper at this time, and expressing his despair, were unfortunately preserved; they are a ghastly play of the poetic faculty in a mind utterly deprived of self-control, and amidst the horrors of inrushing madness. Diabolical they might be termed more truly than religious.

There was nothing for it but a madhouse. The sufferer was consigned to the private asylum of Dr. Cotton, at St. Alban's. An ill-chosen physician Dr. Cotton would have been, if the malady had really had its source in religion; for he was himself a pious man, a writer of hymns, and was in the habit of holding religious intercourse with his patients. Cowper, after his recovery, speaks of that intercourse with the keenest pleasure and gratitude; so that,

in the opinion of the two persons best qualified to judge, religion in this case was not the bane. Cowper has given us a full account of his recovery. It was brought about, as we can plainly see, by medical treatment wisely applied; but it came in the form of a burst of religious faith and hope. He rises one morning feeling better; grows cheerful over his breakfast, takes up the Bible, which in his fits of madness he always threw aside, and turns to a verse in the Epistle to the Romans. "Immediately I received strength to believe, and the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement He had made, my pardon in His blood, and the fulness and completeness of His justification. In a moment I believed and received the Gospel." Cotton at first mistrusted the sudden change; but he was at length satisfied, pronounced his patient cured, and discharged him from the asylum, after a detention of eighteen months. Cowper hymned his deliverance in *The Happy Change*, as in the hideous Sapphics he had given religious utterance to his despair.

"The soul, a dreary province once
Of Satan's dark domain,
Feels a new empire form'd within,
And owns a heavenly reign.

"The glorious orb whose golden beams
The fruitful year control,
Since first obedient to Thy word,
He started from the goal,

"Has cheer'd the nations with the joys
His orient rays impart;
But, Jesus, 'tis Thy light alone
Can shine upon the heart."

Once for all, the reader of Cowper's life must make up his mind to acquiesce in religious forms of expression. If he does not sympathize with them, he will recognize them as phenomena of opinion, and bear them like a philosopher. He can easily translate them into the language of psychology, or even of physiology, if he thinks fit.

CHAPTER II.

AT HUNTINGDON—THE UNWINS.

The storm was over; but it had swept away a great part of Cowper's scanty fortune, and almost all his friends. At thirty-five he was stranded and desolate. He was obliged to resign a Commissionership of Bankruptcy which he held, and little seems to have remained to him but the rent of his chambers in the Temple. A return to his profession was, of course, out of the question. His relations, however, combined to make up a little income for him, though from a hope of his family, he had become a melancholy disappointment; even the Major contributing, in spite of the rather trying incident of the nomination. His brother was kind, and did a brother's duty, but there does not seem to have been much sympathy between them; John Cowper did not become a convert to Evangelical doctrine till he was near his end, and he was incapable of sharing William's spiritual emotions. Of his brilliant companions, the Bonnell Thorntons and the Colmans, the quondam members of the Nonsense Club, he heard no more, till he had himself become famous. But he still had a staunch friend in a less brilliant member of the club, Joseph Hill, the lawyer, evidently a man who united strong sense and depth of character with literary tastes and love of fun, and who was throughout Cowper's life his Mentor in matters of busi-

ness, with regard to which he was himself a child. He had brought with him from the asylum at St. Alban's the servant who had attended him there, and who had been drawn by the singular talisman of personal attraction which partly made up to this frail and helpless being for his entire lack of force. He had also brought from the same place an outcast boy whose case had excited his interest, and for whom he afterwards provided by putting him to a trade. The maintenance of these two retainers was expensive, and led to grumbling among the subscribers to the family subsidy, the Major especially threatening to withdraw his contribution. While the matter was in agitation, Cowper received an anonymous letter couched in the kindest terms, bidding him not distress himself, for that whatever deduction from his income might be made, the loss would be supplied by one who loved him tenderly and approved his conduct. In a letter to Lady Hesketh, he says that he wishes he knew who dictated this letter, and that he had seen not long before a style excessively like it. He can scarcely have failed to guess that it came from Theodora.

It is due to Cowper to say that he accepts the assistance of his relatives, and all acts of kindness done to him, with sweet and becoming thankfulness; and that whatever dark fancies he may have had about his religious state, when the evil spirit was upon him, he always speaks with contentment and cheerfulness of his earthly lot. Nothing splenetic, no element of suspicious and irritable self-love entered into the composition of his character.

On his release from the asylum he was taken in hand by his brother John, who first tried to find lodgings for him at or near Cambridge, and, failing in this, placed him at Huntingdon, within a long ride, so that William becom-

ing a horseman for the purpose, the brothers could meet once a week. Huntingdon was a quiet little town with less than two thousand inhabitants, in a dull country, the best part of which was the Ouse, especially to Cowper, who was fond of bathing. Life there, as in other English country towns in those days, and, indeed, till railroads made people everywhere too restless and migratory for companionship, or even for acquaintance, was sociable in an unrefined way. There were assemblies, dances, races, card-parties, and a bowling-green, at which the little world met and enjoyed itself. From these the new convert, in his spiritual ecstasy, of course turned away as mere modes of murdering time. Three families received him with civility, two of them with cordiality; but the chief acquaintances he made were with "odd scrambling fellows like himself;" an eccentric water-drinker and vegetarian who was to be met by early risers and walkers every morning at six o'clock by his favourite spring; a char-parson, of the class common in those days of sinecurism and non-residence, who walked sixteen miles every Sunday to serve two churches, besides reading daily prayers at Huntingdon, and who regaled his friend with ale brewed by his own hands. In his attached servant the recluse boasted that he had a friend; a friend he might have, but hardly a companion.

For the first days, and even weeks, however, Huntingdon seemed a paradise. The heart of its new inhabitant was full of the unspeakable happiness that comes with calm after storm, with health after the most terrible of maladies, with repose after the burning fever of the brain. When first he went to church, he was in a spiritual ecstasy; it was with difficulty that he restrained his emotions; though his voice was silent, being stopped by the intensity of his feelings, his heart within him sang for joy;

and when the Gospel for the day was read, the sound of it was more than he could well bear. This brightness of his mind communicated itself to all the objects round him—to the sluggish waters of the Ouse, to dull, fenny Huntingdon, and to its commonplace inhabitants.

For about three months his cheerfulness lasted, and with the help of books, and his rides to meet his brother, he got on pretty well; but then "the communion which he had so long been able to maintain with the Lord was suddenly interrupted." This is his theological version of the case; the rationalistic version immediately follows: "I began to dislike my solitary situation, and to fear I should never be able to weather out the winter in so lonely a dwelling." No man could be less fitted to bear a lonely life; persistence in the attempt would soon have brought back his madness. He was longing for a home; and a home was at hand to receive him. It was not, perhaps, one of the happiest kind; but the influence which detracted from its advantages was the one which rendered it hospitable to the wanderer. If Christian piety was carried to a morbid excess beneath its roof, Christian charity opened its door.

The religious revival was now in full career, with Wesley for its chief apostle, organizer, and dictator; Whitefield for its great preacher; Fletcher of Madeley for its typical saint; Lady Huntingdon for its patroness among the aristocracy, and the chief of its "devout women." From the pulpit, but still more from the stand of the field-preacher and through a well-trained army of social propagandists, it waa assailing the scepticism, the coldness, the frivolity, the vices of the age. English society was deeply stirred; multitudes were converted, while among those who were not converted violent and sometimes cruel antagonism was

aroused. The party had two wings—the Evangelicals, people of the wealthier class or clergymen of the Church of England, who remained within the Establishment; and the Methodists, people of the lower middle class or peasants, the personal converts and followers of Wesley and Whitefield, who, like their leaders, without a positive secession, soon found themselves organizing a separate spiritual life in the freedom of Dissent. In the early stages of the movement the Evangelicals were to be counted at most by hundreds, the Methodists by hundreds of thousands. So far as the masses were concerned, it was, in fact, a preaching of Christianity anew. There was a cross division of the party into the Calvinists and those whom the Calvinists called Arminians; Wesley belonging to the latter section, while the most pronounced and vehement of the Calvinists was "the fierce Toplady." As a rule, the darker and sterner element, that which delighted in religious terrors and threatenings was Calvinist, the milder and gentler, that which preached a gospel of love and hope continued to look up to Wesley, and to bear with him the reproach of being Arminian.

It is needless to enter into a minute description of Evangelicism and Methodism; they are not things of the past. If Evangelicism has now been reduced to a narrow domain by the advancing forces of Ritualism on one side and of Rationalism on the other, Methodism is still the great Protestant Church, especially beyond the Atlantic. The spiritual fire which they have kindled, the character which they have produced, the moral reforms which they have wrought, the works of charity and philanthropy to which they have given birth, are matters not only of recent memory, but of present experience. Like the great Protestant revivals which had preceded them in England,

like the Moravian revival on the Continent, to which they were closely related, they sought to bring the soul into direct communion with its Maker, rejecting the intervention of a priesthood or a sacramental system. Unlike the previous revivals in England, they warred not against the rulers of the Church or State, but only against vice or irreligion. Consequently, in the characters which they produced, as compared with those produced by Wycliffism, by the Reformation, and notably by Puritanism, there was less of force and the grandeur connected with it, more of gentleness, mysticism, and religious love. Even Quietism, or something like it, prevailed, especially among the Evangelicals, who were not like the Methodists, engaged in framing a new organization or in wrestling with the barbarous vices of the lower orders. No movement of the kind has ever been exempt from drawbacks and follies, from extravagance, exaggeration, breaches of good taste in religious matters, unctuousness, and cant—from chimerical attempts to get rid of the flesh and live an angelic life on earth—from delusions about special providences and miracles—from a tendency to overvalue doctrine and undervalue duty—from arrogant assumption of spiritual authority by leaders and preachers—from the self-righteousness which fancies itself the object of a divine election, and looks out with a sort of religious complacency from the Ark of Salvation in which it fancies itself securely placed, upon the drowning of an unregenerate world. Still, it will hardly be doubted that in the effects produced by Evangelicism and Methodism the good has outweighed the evil. Had Jansenism prospered as well, France might have had more of reform and less of revolution. The poet of the movement will not be condemned on account of his connexion with it, any more

than Milton is condemned on account of his connexion with Puritanism, provided it be found that he also served art well.

Cowper, as we have seen, was already converted. In a letter written at this time to Lady Hesketh, he speaks of himself with great humility "as a convert made in Bedlam, who is more likely to be a stumbling-block to others than to advance their faith," though he adds, with reason enough, "that he who can ascribe an amendment of life and manners, and a reformation of the heart itself, to madness, is guilty of an absurdity that in any other case would fasten the imputation of madness upon himself." It is hence to be presumed that he traced his conversion to his spiritual intercourse with the Evangelical physician of St. Alban's, though the seed sown by Martin Madan may, perhaps, also have sprung up in his heart when the more propitious season arrived. However that may have been, the two great factors of Cowper's life were the malady which consigned him to poetic seclusion and the conversion to Evangelicism, which gave him his inspiration and his theme.

At Huntingdon dwelt the Rev. William Unwin, a clergyman, taking pupils, his wife, much younger than himself, and their son and daughter. It was a typical family of the Revival. Old Mr. Unwin is described by Cowper as a Parson Adams. The son, William Unwin, was preparing for holy orders. He was a man of some mark, and received tokens of intellectual respect from Paley, though he is best known as the friend to whom many of Cowper's letters are addressed. He it was who, struck by the appearance of the stranger, sought an opportunity of making his acquaintance. He found one, after morning church, when Cowper was taking his solitary walk beneath the

trees. Under the influence of religious sympathy the acquaintance quickly ripened into friendship; Cowper at once became one of the Unwin circle, and soon afterward, a vacancy being made by the departure of one of the pupils, he became a boarder in the house. This position he had passionately desired on religious grounds; but, in truth, he might well have desired it on economical grounds also, for he had begun to experience the difficulty and expensiveness, as well as the loneliness, of bachelor housekeeping, and financial deficit was evidently before him. To Mrs. Unwin he was from the first strongly drawn. "I met Mrs. Unwin in the street," he says, "and went home with her. She and I walked together near two hours in the garden, and had a conversation which did me more good than I should have received from an audience with the first prince in Europe. That woman is a blessing to me, and I never see her without being the better for her company." Mrs. Unwin's character is written in her portrait with its prim but pleasant features; a Puritan and a precisian she was; but she was not morose or sour, and she had a boundless capacity for affection. Lady Hesketh, a woman of the world, and a good judge in every respect, says of her at a later period, when she had passed with Cowper through many sad and trying years: "She is very far from grave; on the contrary, she is cheerful and gay, and laughs *de bon cœur* upon the smallest provocation. Amidst all the little puritanical words which fall from her *de temps en temps*, she seems to have by nature a quiet fund of gaiety; great indeed must it have been, not to have been wholly overcome by the close confinement in which she has lived, and the anxiety she must have undergone for one whom she certainly loves as well as one human being can love another. I will not say she idolizes

him, because that she would think wrong; but she certainly seems to possess the truest regard and affection for this excellent creature, and, as I said before, has in the most literal sense of those words, no will or shadow of inclination but what is his. My account of Mrs. Unwin may seem, perhaps, to you, on comparing my letters, contradictory; but when you consider that I began to write at the first moment that I saw her, you will not wonder. Her character develops itself by degrees; and though I might lead you to suppose her grave and melancholy, she is not so by any means. When she speaks upon grave subjects, she does express herself with a puritanical tone, and in puritanical expressions, but on all subjects she seems to have a great disposition to cheerfulness and mirth; and, indeed, had she not, she could not have gone through all she has. I must say, too, that she seems to be very well read in the English poets, as appears by several little quotations, which she makes from time to time, and has a true taste for what is excellent in that way."

When Cowper became an author he paid the highest respect to Mrs. Unwin as an instinctive critic, and called her his Lord Chamberlain, whose approbation was his sufficient licence for publication.

Life in the Unwin family is thus described by the new inmate:—"As to amusements—I mean what the world calls such—we have none. The place, indeed, swarms with them; and cards and dancing are the professed business of almost all the *gentle* inhabitants of Huntingdon. We refuse to take part in them, or to be accessories to this way of murdering our time, and by so doing have acquired the name of Methodists. Having told you how we *do not* spend our time, I will next say how we do. We breakfast commonly between eight and nine; till eleven, we read

either the Scripture, or the sermons of some faithful preacher of those holy mysteries; at eleven we attend divine service, which is performed here twice every day; and from twelve to three we separate, and amuse ourselves as we please. During that interval, I either read in my own apartment, or walk, or ride, or work in the garden. We seldom sit an hour after dinner, but, if the weather permits, adjourn to the garden, where, with Mrs. Unwin and her son, I have generally the pleasure of religious conversation till tea-time. If it rains, or is too windy for walking, we either converse within doors or sing some hymns of Martin's collection, and by the help of Mrs. Unwin's harpsichord make up a tolerable concert, in which our hearts, I hope, are the best performers. After tea we sally forth to walk in good earnest. Mrs. Unwin is a good walker, and we have generally travelled about four miles before we see home again. When the days are short we make this excursion in the former part of the day, between church-time and dinner. At night we read and converse as before till supper, and commonly finish the evening either with hymns or a sermon, and last of all the family are called to prayers. I need not tell you that such a life as this is consistent with the utmost cheerfulness; accordingly, we are all happy, and dwell together in unity as brethren."

Mrs. Cowper, the wife of Major (now Colonel) Cowper, to whom this was written, was herself strongly Evangelical; Cowper had, in fact, unfortunately for him, turned from his other relations and friends to her on that account. She, therefore, would have no difficulty in thinking that such a life was consistent with cheerfulness, but ordinary readers will ask how it could fail to bring on another fit of hypochondria. The answer is probably to be found in

the last words of the passage. Overstrained and ascetic piety found an antidote in affection. The Unwins were Puritans and enthusiasts, but their household was a picture of domestic love.

With the name of Mrs. Cowper is connected an incident which occurred at this time, and which illustrates the propensity to self-inspection and self-revelation which Cowper had in common with Rousseau. Huntingdon, like other little towns, was all eyes and gossip; the new-comer was a mysterious stranger who kept himself aloof from the general society, and he naturally became the mark for a little stone-throwing. Young Unwin happening to be passing near "the Park" on his way from London to Huntingdon, Cowper gave him an introduction to its lady, in a letter to whom he afterwards disclosed his secret motive. "My dear Cousin,—You sent my friend Unwin home to us charmed with your kind reception of him, and with everything he saw at the Park. Shall I once more give you a peep into my vile and deceitful heart? What motive do you think lay at the bottom of my conduct when I desired him to call upon you? I did not suspect, at first, that pride and vainglory had any share in it; but quickly after I had recommended the visit to him, I discovered, in that fruitful soil, the very root of the matter. You know I am a stranger here; all such are suspected characters, unless they bring their credentials with them. To this moment, I believe, it is a matter of speculation in the place, whence I came, and to whom I belong. Though my friend, you may suppose, before I was admitted an inmate here, was satisfied that I was not a mere vagabond, and has, since that time, received more convincing proofs of my *sponsibility;* yet I could not resist the opportunity of furnishing him with ocular demonstration of it, by in-

troducing him to one of my most splendid connexions; that when he hears me called 'that fellow Cowper,' which has happened heretofore, he may be able, upon unquestionable evidence, to assert my gentlemanhood, and relieve me from the weight of that opprobrious appellation. Oh, pride! pride! it deceives with the subtlety of a serpent, and seems to walk erect, though it crawls upon the earth. How will it twist and twine itself about to get from under the Cross, which it is the glory of our Christian calling to be able to bear with patience and good-will. They who can guess at the heart of a stranger,—and you especially, who are of a compassionate temper,—will be more ready, perhaps, to excuse me, in this instance, than I can be to excuse myself. But, in good truth, it was abominable pride of heart, indignation, and vanity, and deserves no better name."

Once more, however obsolete Cowper's belief, and the language in which he expresses it may have become for many of us, we must take it as his philosophy of life. At this time, at all events, it was a source of happiness. "The storm being passed, a quiet and peaceful serenity of soul succeeded;" and the serenity in this case was unquestionably produced in part by the faith.

"I was a stricken deer that left the herd
Long since; with many an arrow deep infixed
My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
There was I found by one who had himself
Been hurt by the archers. In his side he bore,
And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars,
With gentle force soliciting the darts,
He drew them forth and healed and bade me live."

Cowper thought for a moment of taking orders, but his dread of appearing in public conspired with the good sense which lay beneath his excessive sensibility to put a veto on the design. He, however, exercised the zeal of a neophyte in proselytism to a greater extent than his own judgment and good taste approved when his enthusiasm had calmed down.

CHAPTER III.

AT OLNEY—MR. NEWTON.

Cowper had not been two years with the Unwins when Mr. Unwin, the father, was killed by a fall from his horse; this broke up the household. But between Cowper and Mrs. Unwin an indissoluble tie had been formed. It seems clear, notwithstanding Southey's assertion to the contrary that they at one time meditated marriage, possibly as a propitiation to the evil tongues which did not spare even this most innocent connexion; but they were prevented from fulfilling their intention by a return of Cowper's malady. They became companions for life. Cowper says they were as mother and son to each other; but Mrs. Unwin was only seven years older than he. To label their connexion is impossible, and to try to do it would be a platitude. In his poems Cowper calls Mrs. Unwin Mary; she seems always to have called him Mr. Cowper. It is evident that her son, a strictly virtuous and religious man, never had the slightest misgiving about his mother's position.

The pair had to choose a dwelling-place; they chose Olney, in Buckinghamshire, on the Ouse. The Ouse was "a slow winding river," watering low meadows, from which crept pestilential fogs. Olney was a dull town, or rather village, inhabited by a population of lace-makers,

ill-paid, fever-stricken, and for the most part as brutal as they were poor. There was not a woman in the place, excepting Mrs. Newton, with whom Mrs. Unwin could associate, or to whom she could look for help in sickness or other need. The house in which the pair took up their abode was dismal, prison-like, and tumble-down; when they left it, the competitors for the succession were a cobbler and a publican. It looked upon the Market-place, but it was in the close neighbourhood of Silver End, the worst part of Olney. In winter the cellars were full of water. There were no pleasant walks within easy reach, and in winter Cowper's only exercise was pacing thirty yards of gravel, with the dreary supplement of dumb-bells. What was the attraction to this "well," this "abyss," as Cowper himself called it, and as, physically and socially, it was?

The attraction was the presence of the Rev. John Newton, then curate of Olney. The vicar was Moses Brown, an Evangelical and a religious writer, who has even deserved a place among the worthies of the revival; but a family of thirteen children, some of whom it appears too closely resembled the sons of Eli, had compelled him to take advantage of the indulgent character of the ecclesiastical polity of those days by becoming a pluralist and a non-resident, so that the curate had Olney to himself. The patron was the Lord Dartmouth, who, as Cowper says, "wore a coronet and prayed." John Newton was one of the shining lights and foremost leaders and preachers of the revival. His name was great both in the Evangelical churches within the pale of the Establishment, and in the Methodist churches without it. He was a brand plucked from the very heart of the burning. We have a memoir of his life, partly written by himself, in the form of letters, and completed under his superintendence. It is a monument

of the age of Smollett and Wesley, not less characteristic than is Cellini's memoir of the times in which he lived. His father was master of a vessel, and took him to sea when he was eleven. His mother was a pious Dissenter, who was at great pains to store his mind with religious thoughts and pieces. She died when he was young, and his step-mother was not pious. He began to drag his religious anchor, and at length, having read Shaftesbury, left his theological moorings altogether, and drifted into a wide sea of ungodliness, blasphemy, and recklessness of living. Such at least is the picture drawn by the sinner saved of his own earlier years. While still but a strippling he fell desperately in love with a girl of thirteen; his affection for her was as constant as it was romantic; through all his wanderings and sufferings he never ceased to think of her, and after seven years she became his wife. His father frowned on the engagement, and he became estranged from home. He was impressed; narrowly escaped shipwreck, deserted, and was arrested and flogged as a deserter. Released from the navy, he was taken into the service of a slave-dealer on the coast of Africa, at whose hands, and those of the man's negro mistress, he endured every sort of ill-treatment and contumely, being so starved that he was fain sometimes to devour raw roots to stay his hunger. His constitution must have been of iron to carry him through all that he endured. In the meantime his indomitable mind was engaged in attempts at self-culture; he studied a Euclid which he had brought with him, drawing his diagrams on the sand; and he afterwards managed to teach himself Latin by means of a Horace and a Latin Bible, aided by some slight vestiges of the education which he had received at a grammar-school. His conversion was brought about by the continued influences of Thomas à

Kempis, of a very narrow escape, after terrible sufferings, from shipwreck, of the impression made by the sights of the mighty deep on a soul which, in its weather-beaten casing, had retained its native sensibility, and, we may safely add, of the disregarded but not forgotten teachings of his pious mother. Providence was now kind to him; he became captain of a slave-ship, and made several voyages on the business of the trade. That it was a wicked trade he seems to have had no idea; he says he never knew sweeter or more frequent hours of divine communion than on his two last voyages to Guinea. Afterwards it occurred to him that though his employment was genteel and profitable, it made him a sort of gaoler, unpleasantly conversant with both chains and shackles; and he besought Providence to fix him in a more humane calling.

In answer to his prayer came a fit of apoplexy, which made it dangerous for him to go to sea again. He obtained an office in the port of Liverpool, but soon he set his heart on becoming a minister of the Church of England. He applied for ordination to the Archbishop of York, but not having the degree required by the rules of the Establishment, he received through his Grace's secretary "the softest refusal imaginable." The Archbishop had not had the advantage of perusing Lord Macaulay's remarks on the difference between the policy of the Church of England and that of the Church of Rome, with regard to the utilization of religious enthusiasts. In the end Newton was ordained by the Bishop of Lincoln, and threw himself with the energy of a new-born apostle upon the irreligion and brutality of Olney. No Carthusian's breast could glow more intensely with the zeal which is the offspring of remorse. Newton was a Calvinist, of course, though it seems not an extreme one; otherwise he would

probably have confirmed Cowper in the darkest of hallucinations. His religion was one of mystery and miracle, full of sudden conversions, special providences, and satanic visitations. He himself says that "his name was up about the country for preaching people mad;" it is true that in the eyes of the profane Methodism itself was madness; but he goes on to say "whether it is owing to the sedentary life the women live here, poring over their (lace) pillows for ten or twelve hours every day, and breathing confined air in their crowded little rooms, or whatever may be the immediate cause, I suppose we have near a dozen in different degrees disordered in their heads, and most of them I believe truly gracious people." He surmises that "these things are permitted in judgment, that they who seek occasion for cavilling and stumbling may have what they want." Nevertheless there were in him not only force, courage, burning zeal for doing good, but great kindness, and even tenderness of heart. "I see in this world," he said, "two heaps of human happiness and misery; now, if I can take but the smallest bit from one heap and add it to the other, I carry a point—if, as I go home, a child has dropped a half-penny, and by giving it another I can wipe away its tears, I feel I have done something." There was even in him a strain, if not of humour, of a shrewdness which was akin to it, and expressed itself in many pithy sayings. "If two angels came down from heaven to execute a divine command, and one was appointed to conduct an empire and the other to sweep a street in it, they would feel no inclination to change employments." "A Christian should never plead spirituality for being a sloven; if he be but a shoe-cleaner, he should be the best in the parish." "My principal method for defeating heresy is by establishing truth. One proposes to

fill a bushel with tares; now if I can fill it first with wheat, I shall defy his attempts." That his Calvinism was not very dark or sulphureous, seems to be shown from his repeating with gusto the saying of one of the old women of Olney when some preacher dwelt on the doctrine of predestination—"Ah, I have long settled that point; for if God had not chosen me before I was born, I am sure he would have seen nothing to have chosen me for afterwards." That he had too much sense to take mere profession for religion appears from his describing the Calvinists of Olney as of two sorts, which reminded him of the two baskets of Jeremiah's figs. The iron constitution which had carried him through so many hardships enabled him to continue in his ministry to extreme old age. A friend at length counselled him to stop before he found himself stopped by being able to speak no longer. "I cannot stop," he said, raising his voice. "What! shall the old African blasphemer stop while he can speak?"

At the instance of a common friend, Newton had paid Mrs. Unwin a visit at Huntingdon, after her husband's death, and had at once established the ascendency of a powerful character over her and Cowper. He now beckoned the pair to his side, placed them in the house adjoining his own, and opened a private door between the two gardens, so as to have his spiritual children always beneath his eye. Under this, in the most essential respect, unhappy influence, Cowper and Mrs. Unwin together entered on "a decided course of Christian happiness;" that is to say, they spent all their days in a round of religious exercises without relaxation or relief. On fine summer evenings, as the sensible Lady Hesketh saw with dismay, instead of a walk, there was a prayer-meeting. Cowper himself was made to do violence to his intense shyness by leading in

prayer. He was also made to visit the poor at once on spiritual missions, and on that of almsgiving, for which Thornton, the religious philanthropist, supplied Newton and his disciples with means. This, which Southey appears to think about the worst part of Newton's regimen, was probably its redeeming feature. The effect of doing good to others on any mind was sure to be good; and the sight of real suffering was likely to banish fancied ills. Cowper in this way gained, at all events, a practical knowledge of the poor, and learned to do them justice, though from a rather too theological point of view. Seclusion from the sinful world was as much a part of the system of Mr. Newton as it was of the system of Saint Benedict. Cowper was almost entirely cut off from intercourse with his friends and people of his own class. He dropped his correspondence even with his beloved cousin, Lady Hesketh, and would probably have dropped his correspondence with Hill, had not Hill's assistance in money matters been indispensable. To complete his mental isolation, it appears that, having sold his library, he had scarcely any books. Such a course of Christian happiness as this could only end in one way; and Newton himself seems to have had the sense to see that a storm was brewing, and that there was no way of conjuring it but by contriving some more congenial occupation. So the disciple was commanded to employ his poetical gifts in contributing to a hymn-book which Newton was compiling. Cowper's Olney hymns have not any serious value as poetry. Hymns rarely have. The relations of man with Deity transcend and repel poetical treatment. There is nothing in them on which the creative imagination can be exercised. Hymns can be little more than incense of the worshipping soul. Those of the Latin Church are the best; not because they are better

poetry than the rest (for they are not), but because their language is the most sonorous. Cowper's hymns were accepted by the religious body for which they were written, as expressions of its spiritual feeling and desires; so far they were successful. They are the work of a religious man of culture, and free from anything wild, erotic, or unctuous. But, on the other hand, there is nothing in them suited to be the vehicle of lofty devotion; nothing, that we can conceive a multitude, or even a prayer-meeting, uplifting to heaven with voice and heart. Southey has pointed to some passages on which the shadow of the advancing malady falls; but in the main there is a predominance of religious joy and hope. The most despondent hymn of the series is *Temptation*, the thought of which resembles that of *The Castaway*.

Cowper's melancholy may have been aggravated by the loss of his only brother, who died about this time, and at whose death-bed he was present; though in the narrative which he wrote, joy at John's conversion and the religious happiness of his end seems to exclude the feelings by which hypochondria was likely to be fed. But his mode of life under Newton was enough to account for the return of his disease, which in this sense may be fairly laid to the charge of religion. He again went mad, fancied, as before, that he was rejected of Heaven, ceased to pray as one helplessly doomed, and again attempted suicide. Newton and Mrs. Unwin at first treated the disease as a diabolical visitation, and "with deplorable consistency," to borrow the phrase used by one of their friends in the case of Cowper's desperate abstinence from prayer, abstained from calling in a physician. Of this, again, their religion must bear the reproach. In other respects they behaved admirably. Mrs. Unwin, shut up for sixteen

months with her unhappy partner, tended him with unfailing love; alone she did it, for he could bear no one else about him; though, to make her part more trying, he had conceived the insane idea that she hated him. Seldom has a stronger proof been given of the sustaining power of affection. Assuredly, of whatever Cowper may have afterwards done for his kind, a great part must be set down to the credit of Mrs. Unwin.

"Mary! I want a lyre with other strings,
Such aid from heaven as some have feigned they drew,
An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new
And undebased by praise of meaner things,
That, ere through age or woe I shed my wings,
I may record thy worth with honour due,
In verse as musical as thou art true,
And that immortalizes whom it sings.
But thou hast little need. There is a book
By seraphs writ with beams of heavenly light,
On which the eyes of God not rarely look,
A chronicle of actions just and bright;
There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine,
And, since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine."

Newton's friendship, too, was sorely tried. In the midst of the malady the lunatic took it into his head to transfer himself from his own house to the Vicarage, which he obstinately refused to leave; and Newton bore this infliction for several months without repining, though he might well pray carnestly for his friend's deliverance. "The Lord has numbered the days in which I am appointed to wait on him in this dark valley, and he has given us such a love to him, both as a believer and a friend, that I am not weary: but to be sure his deliverance would be to me one

of the greatest blessings my thoughts can conceive." Dr. Cotton was at last called in, and under his treatment, evidently directed against a bodily disease, Cowper was at length restored to sanity.

Newton once compared his own walk in the world to that of a physician going through Bedlam. But he was not skilful in his treatment of the literally insane. He thought to cajole Cowper out of his cherished horrors by calling his attention to a case resembling his own. The case was that of Simon Browne, a Dissenter, who had conceived the idea that, being under the displeasure of Heaven, he had been entirely deprived of his rational being and left with merely his animal nature. He had accordingly resigned his ministry, and employed himself in compiling a dictionary, which, he said, was doing nothing that could require a reasonable soul. He seems to have thought that theology fell under the same category, for he proceeded to write some theological treatises, which he dedicated to Queen Caroline, calling her Majesty's attention to the singularity of the authorship as the most remarkable phenomenon of her reign. Cowper, however, instead of falling into the desired train of reasoning, and being led to suspect the existence of a similar illusion in himself, merely rejected the claim of the pretended rival in spiritual affliction, declaring his own case to be far the more deplorable of the two.

Before the decided course of Christian happiness had time again to culminate in madness, fortunately for Cowper, Newton left Olney for St. Mary Woolnoth. He was driven away at last by a quarrel with his barbarous parishioners, the cause of which did him credit. A fire broke out at Olney, and burnt a good many of its straw-thatched cottages. Newton ascribed the extinction of the fire rath-

er to prayer than water, but he took the lead in practical measures of relief, and tried to remove the earthly cause of such visitations by putting an end to bonfires and illuminations on the 5th of November. Threatened with the loss of their Guy Fawkes, the barbarians rose upon him, and he had a narrow escape from their violence. We are reminded of the case of Cotton Mather, who, after being a leader in witch-burning, nearly sacrificed his life in combatting the fanaticism which opposed itself to the introduction of inoculation. Let it always be remembered that besides its theological side, the Revival had its philanthropic and moral side; that it abolished the slave-trade, and at last slavery; that it waged war, and effective war, under the standard of the gospel, upon masses of vice and brutality, which had been totally neglected by the torpor of the Establishment; that among large classes of the people it was the great civilizing agency of the time.

Newton was succeeded as curate of Olney by his disciple, and a man of somewhat the same cast of mind and character, Thomas Scott, the writer of the *Commentary on the Bible* and *The Force of Truth.* To Scott Cowper seems not to have greatly taken. He complains that, as a preacher, he is always scolding the congregation. Perhaps Newton had foreseen that it would be so, for he specially commended the spiritual son whom he was leaving to the care of the Rev. William Bull, of the neighbouring town of Newport Pagnell, a dissenting minister, but a member of a spiritual connexion which did not stop at the line of demarcation between Nonconformity and the Establishment. To Bull Cowper did greatly take; he extols him as "a Dissenter, but a liberal one," a man of letters and of genius, master of a fine imagination—or, rather, not master of it—and addresses him as *Carissime Taurorum.* It is rath-

er singular that Newton should have given himself such a successor. Bull was a great smoker, and had made himself a cozy and secluded nook in his garden for the enjoyment of his pipe. He was probably something of a spiritual as well as of a physical Quietist, for he set Cowper to translate the poetry of the great exponent of Quietism, Madame Guyon. The theme of all the pieces which Cowper has translated is the same—Divine Love and the raptures of the heart that enjoys it—the blissful union of the drop with the Ocean—the Evangelical Nirvana. If this line of thought was not altogether healthy, or conducive to the vigorous performance of practical duty, it was, at all events, better than the dark fancy of Reprobation. In his admiration of Madame Guyon, her translator showed his affinity, and that of Protestants of the same school, to Fénelon and the Evangelical element which has lurked in the Roman Catholic church since the days of Thomas à Kempis.

CHAPTER IV.

AUTHORSHIP—THE MORAL SATIRES.

Since his recovery, Cowper had been looking out for what he most needed, a pleasant occupation. He tried drawing, carpentering, gardening. Of gardening he had always been fond; and he understood it, as shown by the loving though somewhat "stercoraceous" minuteness of some passages in *The Task*. A little greenhouse, used as a parlour in summer, where he sat surrounded by beauty and fragrance, and lulled by pleasant sounds, was another product of the same pursuit, and seems almost Elysian in that dull, dark life. He also found amusement in keeping tame hares, and he fancied that he had reconciled the hare to man and dog. His three tame hares are among the canonized pets of literature, and they were to his genius what "Sailor" was to the genius of Byron. But Mrs. Unwin, who had terrible reason for studying his case, saw that the thing most wanted was congenial employment for the mind, and she incited him to try his hand at poetry on a larger scale. He listened to her advice, and when he was nearly fifty years of age became a poet. He had acquired the faculty of verse-writing, as we have seen; he had even to some extent formed his manner when he was young. Age must by this time have quenched his fire, and tamed his imagination, so that the didactic style would suit him

best. In the length of the interval between his early poems and his great work he resembles Milton; but widely different in the two cases had been the current of the intervening years.

Poetry written late in life is, of course, free from youthful crudity and extravagance. It also escapes the youthful tendency to imitation. Cowper's authorship is ushered in by Southey with a history of English poetry; but this is hardly in place; Cowper had little connexion with anything before him. Even his knowledge of poetry was not great. In his youth he had read the great poets, and had studied Milton especially with the ardour of intense admiration. Nothing ever made him so angry as Johnson's Life of Milton. "Oh!" he cries, "I could thrash his old jacket till I made his pension jingle in his pocket." Churchill had made a great—far too great—an impression on him when he was a Templar. Of Churchill, if of anybody, he must be regarded as a follower, though only in his earlier and less successful poems. In expression he always regarded as a model the neat and gay simplicity of Prior. But so little had he kept up his reading of anything but sermons and hymns, that he learned for the first time from Johnson's Lives the existence of Collins. He is the offspring of the Religious Revival rather than of any school of art. His most important relation to any of his predecessors is, in fact, one of antagonism to the hard glitter of Pope.

In urging her companion to write poetry, Mrs. Unwin was on the right path; her puritanism led her astray in the choice of a theme. She suggested *The Progress of Error* as a subject for a "Moral Satire." It was unhappily adopted, and *The Progress of Error* was followed by *Truth*, *Table Talk*, *Expostulation*, *Hope*, *Charity*, *Conver-*

sation, and *Retirement*. When the series was published, *Table Talk* was put first, being supposed to be the lightest and the most attractive to an unregenerate world. The judgment passed upon this set of poems at the time by the *Critical Review* seems blasphemous to the fond biographer, and is so devoid of modern smartness as to be almost interesting as a literary fossil. But it must be deemed essentially just, though the reviewer errs, as many reviewers have erred, in measuring the writer's capacity by the standard of his first performance. "These poems," said the *Critical Review*, "are written, as we learn from the title-page, by Mr. Cowper of the Inner Temple, who seems to be a man of a sober and religious turn of mind, with a benevolent heart, and a serious wish to inculcate the precepts of morality; he is not, however, possessed of any superior abilities or the power of genius requisite for so arduous an undertaking. . . . He says what is incontrovertible, and what has been said over and over again with much gravity, but says nothing new, sprightly, or entertaining; travelling on a plain, level, flat road, with great composure almost through the whole long and tedious volume, which is little better than a dull sermon in very indifferent verse on Truth, the Progress of Error, Charity, and some other grave subjects. If this author had followed the advice given by Caraccioli, and which he has chosen for one of the mottoes prefixed to these poems, he would have clothed his indisputable truths in some more becoming disguise, and rendered his work much more agreeable. In its present shape we cannot compliment him on its beauty; for as this bard himself sweetly sings:—

> "The clear harangue, and cold as it is clear,
> Falls soporific on the listless ear."

In justice to the bard it ought to be said that he wrote under the eye of the Rev. John Newton, to whom the design had been duly submitted, and who had given his *imprimatur* in the shape of a preface which took Johnson, the publisher, aback by its gravity. Newton would not have sanctioned any poetry which had not a distinctly religious object, and he received an assurance from the poet that the lively passages were introduced only as honey on the rim of the medicinal cup, to commend its healing contents to the lips of a giddy world. The Rev. John Newton must have been exceedingly austere if he thought that the quantity of honey used was excessive.

A genuine desire to make society better is always present in these poems, and its presence lends them the only interest which they possess except as historical monuments of a religious movement. Of satirical vigour they have scarcely a semblance. There are three kinds of satire, corresponding to as many different views of humanity and life; the Stoical, the Cynical, and the Epicurean. Of Stoical satire, with its strenuous hatred of vice and wrong, the type is Juvenal. Of Cynical satire, springing from bitter contempt of humanity, the type is Swift's Gulliver, while its quintessence is embodied in his lines on the Day of Judgment. Of Epicurean satire, flowing from a contempt of humanity which is not bitter, and lightly playing with the weakness and vanities of mankind, Horace is the classical example. To the first two kinds, Cowper's nature was totally alien, and when he attempts anything in either of those lines, the only result is a querulous and censorious acerbity, in which his real feelings had no part, and which on mature reflection offended his own better taste. In the Horatian kind he might have excelled, as the episode of the *Retired Statesman* in one of these poems shows.

He might have excelled, that is, if like Horace he had known the world. But he did not know the world. He saw the "great Babel" only "through the loopholes of retreat," and in the columns of his weekly newspaper. Even during the years, long past, which he spent in the world, his experience had been confined to a small literary circle. Society was to him an abstraction on which he discoursed like a pulpiteer. His satiric whip not only has no lash, it is brandished in the air.

No man was ever less qualified for the office of a censor; his judgment is at once disarmed, and a breach in his principles is at once made by the slightest personal influence. Bishops are bad; they are like the Cretans, evil beasts and slow bellies; but the bishop whose brother Cowper knows is a blessing to the Church. Deans and Canons are lazy sinecurists, but there is a bright exception in the case of the Cowper who held a golden stall at Durham. Grinding India is criminal, but Warren Hastings is acquitted, because he was with Cowper at Westminster. Discipline was deplorably relaxed in all colleges except that of which Cowper's brother was a fellow. Pluralities and resignation bonds, the grossest abuses of the Church, were perfectly defensible in the case of any friend or acquaintance of this Church Reformer. Bitter lines against Popery inserted in *The Task* were struck out, because the writer had made the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. Throckmorton, who were Roman Catholics. Smoking was detestable, except when practised by dear Mr. Bull. Even gambling, the blackest sin of fashionable society, is not to prevent Fox, the great Whig, from being a ruler in Israel. Besides, in all his social judgments, Cowper is at a wrong point of view. He is always deluded by the idol of his cave. He writes perpetually on the twofold assumption

that a life of retirement is more favourable to virtue than a life of action, and that "God made the country, while man made the town." Both parts of the assumption are untrue. A life of action is more favourable to virtue, as a rule, than a life of retirement, and the development of humanity is higher and richer, as a rule, in the town than in the country. If Cowper's retirement was virtuous, it was so because he was actively employed in the exercise of his highest faculties: had he been a mere idler, secluded from his kind, his retirement would not have been virtuous at all. His flight, from the world was rendered necessary by his malady, and respectable by his literary work; but it was a flight and not a victory. His misconception was fostered and partly produced by a religion which was essentially ascetic, and which, while it gave birth to characters of the highest and most energetic beneficence, represented salvation too little as the reward of effort, too much as the reward of passive belief and of spiritual emotion.

The most readable of the Moral Satires is *Retirement*, in which the writer is on his own ground, expressing his genuine feelings, and which is, in fact, a foretaste of *The Task*. *Expostulation*, a warning to England from the example of the Jews, is the best constructed; the rest are totally wanting in unity, and even in connexion. In all there are flashes of epigrammatic smartness.

"How shall I speak thee, or thy power address,
Thou God of our idolatry, the press?
By thee, religion, liberty, and laws
Exert their influence, and advance their cause;
By thee, worse plagues than Pharaoh's land befel,
Diffused, make earth the vestibule of hell:
Thou fountain, at which drink the good and wise,
Thou ever-bubbling spring of endless lies,

Like Eden's dread probationary tree,
Knowledge of good and evil is from thee."

Occasionally there are passages of higher merit. The episode of statesmen in *Retirement* has been already mentioned. The lines on the two disciples going to Emmaus in *Conversation*, though little more than a paraphrase of the Gospel narrative, convey pleasantly the Evangelical idea of the Divine Friend. Cowper says in one of his letters that he had been intimate with a man of fine taste who had confessed to him that though he could not subscribe to the truth of Christianity itself, he could never read this passage of St. Luke without being deeply affected by it, and feeling that if the stamp of divinity was impressed upon anything in the Scriptures, it was upon that passage.

"It happen'd on a solemn eventide,
Soon after He that was our surety died,
Two bosom friends, each pensively inclined,
The scene of all those sorrows left behind,
Sought their own village, busied as they went
In musings worthy of the great event:
They spake of him they loved, of him whose life,
Though blameless, had incurr'd perpetual strife,
Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,
A deep memorial graven on their hearts.
The recollection, like a vein of ore,
The farther traced enrich'd them still the more;
They thought him, and they justly thought him, one
Sent to do more than he appear'd to have done,
To exalt a people, and to place them high
Above all else, and wonder'd he should die.
Ere yet they brought their journey to an end,
A stranger join'd them, courteous as a friend,

And ask'd them with a kind engaging air
What their affliction was, and begg'd a share.
Inform'd, he gather'd up the broken thread,
And truth and wisdom gracing all he said,
Explain'd, illustrated, and search'd so well
The tender theme on which they chose to dwell,
That reaching home, the night, they said is near,
We must not now be parted, sojourn here.—
The new acquaintance soon became a guest,
And made so welcome at their simple feast,
He bless'd the bread, but vanish'd at the word,
And left them both exclaiming, 'Twas the Lord!
Did not our hearts feel all he deign'd to say,
Did they not burn within us by the way?"

The prude going to morning church in *Truth* is a good rendering of Hogarth's picture:—

"You ancient prude, whose wither'd features show
She might be young some forty years ago,
Her elbows pinion'd close upon her hips,
Her head erect, her fan upon her lips,
Her eyebrows arch'd, her eyes both gone astray
To watch yon amorous couple in their play,
With bony and unkerchief'd neck defies
The rude inclemency of wintry skies,
And sails with lappet-head and mincing airs
Daily, at clink of bell, to morning prayers.
To thrift and parsimony much inclined,
She yet allows herself that boy behind;
The shivering urchin, bending as he goes,
With slipshod heels, and dew-drop at his nose,
His predecessor's coat advanced to wear,
Which future pages are yet doom'd to share;
Carries her Bible tuck'd beneath his arm,
And hides his hands to keep his fingers warm."

Of personal allusions there are a few; if the satirist had not been prevented from indulging in them by his taste, he would have been debarred by his ignorance. Lord Chesterfield, as the incarnation of the world and the most brilliant servant of the arch-enemy, comes in for a lashing under the name of Petronius.

> "Petronius! all the muses weep for thee.
> But every tear shall scald thy memory.
> The graces too, while virtue at their shrine
> Lay bleeding under that soft hand of thine,
> Felt each a mortal stab in her own breast,
> Abhorr'd the sacrifice, and cursed the priest.
> Thou polish'd and high-finish'd foe to truth,
> Gray-beard corrupter of our listening youth,
> To purge and skim away the filth of vice,
> That so refined it might the more entice,
> Then pour it on the morals of thy son
> To taint *his* heart, was worthy of *thine own*."

This is about the nearest approach to Juvenal that the Evangelical satirist ever makes. In *Hope* there is a vehement vindication of the memory of Whitefield. It is rather remarkable that there is no mention of Wesley. But Cowper belonged to the Evangelical rather than to the Methodist section. It may be doubted whether the living Whitefield would have been much to his taste.

In the versification of the moral satires there are frequent faults, especially in the earlier poems of the series; though Cowper's power of writing musical verse is attested both by the occasional poems and by *The Task*.

With the Moral Satires may be coupled, though written later, *Tirocinium; or, a Review of Schools*. Here Cowper has the advantage of treating a subject which he under-

stood, about which he felt strongly, and desired for a practical purpose to stir the feelings of his readers. He set to work in bitter earnest. "There is a sting," he says, "in verse that prose neither has nor can have; and I do not know that schools in the gross, and especially public schools, have ever been so pointedly condemned before. But they are become a nuisance, a pest, an abomination, and it is fit that the eyes and noses of mankind should be opened, if possible, to perceive it." His descriptions of the miseries which children in his day endured, and, in spite of all our improvements, must still to some extent endure, in boarding-schools, and of the effects of the system in estranging boys from their parents and deadening home affections, are vivid and true. Of course, the Public School system was not to be overturned by rhyming, but the author of *Tirocinium* awakened attention to its faults, and probably did something towards amending them. The best lines, perhaps, have been already quoted in connexion with the history of the writer's boyhood. There are, however, other telling passages, such as that on the indiscriminate use of emulation as a stimulus:—

"Our public hives of puerile resort
That are of chief and most approved report,
To such base hopes in many a sordid soul
Owe their repute in part, but not the whole.
A principle, whose proud pretensions pass
Unquestion'd, though the jewel be but glass,
That with a world not often over-nice
Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice,
Or rather a gross compound, justly tried,
Of envy, hatred, jealousy, and pride,
Contributes most perhaps to enhance their fame,
And Emulation is its precious name.

Boys once on fire with that contentious zeal
Feel all the rage that female rivals feel;
The prize of beauty in a woman's eyes
Not brighter than in theirs the scholar's prize.
The spirit of that competition burns
With all varieties of ill by turns,
Each vainly magnifies his own success,
Resents his fellow's, wishes it were less,
Exults in his miscarriage if he fail,
Deems his reward too great if he prevail,
And labours to surpass him day and night,
Less for improvement than to tickle spite.
The spur is powerful, and I grant its force;
It pricks the genius forward in its course,
Allows short time for play, and none for sloth,
And felt alike by each, advances both,
But judge where so much evil intervenes,
The end, though plausible, not worth the means.
Weigh, for a moment, classical desert
Against a heart depraved and temper hurt,
Hurt, too, perhaps for life, for early wrong
Done to the nobler part, affects it long,
And you are staunch indeed in learning's cause,
If you can crown a discipline that draws
Such mischiefs after it, with much applause."

He might have done more, if he had been able to point to the alternative of a good day-school, as a combination of home affections with the superior teachings hardly to be found, except in a large school, and which Cowper, in drawing his comparison between the two systems, fails to take into account.

To the same general class of poems belongs *Anti-Thelypthora*, which it is due to Cowper's memory to say was not published in his lifetime. It is an angry pasquinade

on an absurd book advocating polygamy on Biblical grounds, by the Rev. Martin Madan, Cowper's quondam spiritual counsellor. Alone among Cowper's works it has a taint of coarseness.

The Moral Satires pleased Franklin, to whom their social philosophy was congenial, as at a later day, in common with all Cowper's works, they pleased Cobden, who no doubt specially relished the passage in *Charity*, embodying the philanthropic sentiment of Free Trade. There was a trembling consultation as to the expediency of bringing the volume under the notice of Johnson. "One of his pointed sarcasms, if he should happen to be displeased, would soon find its way into all companies, and spoil the sale." "I think it would be well to send in our joint names, accompanied with a handsome card, such an one as you will know how to fabricate, and such as may predispose him to a favourable perusal of the book, by coaxing him into a good temper; for he is a great bear, with all his learning and penetration." Fear prevailed; but it seems that the book found its way into the dictator's hands, that his judgment on it was kind, and that he even did something to temper the wind of adverse criticism to the shorn lamb. Yet parts of it were likely to incur his displeasure as a Tory, as a Churchman, and as one who greatly preferred Fleet Street to the beauties of nature; while with the sentimental misery of the writer, he could have had no sympathy whatever. Of the incompleteness of Johnson's view of character there could be no better instance than the charming weakness of Cowper. Thurlow and Colman did not even acknowledge their copies, and were lashed for their breach of friendship with rather more vigour than the Moral Satires display, in *The Valedictory*, which unluckily survived for post-

humous publication when the culprits had made their peace.

Cowper certainly misread himself if he believed that ambition, even literary ambition, was a large element in his character. But having published, he felt a keen interest in the success of his publication. Yet he took its failure and the adverse criticism very calmly. With all his sensitiveness, from irritable and suspicious egotism, such as is the most common cause of moral madness, he was singularly free. In this respect his philosophy served him well.

It may safely be said that the Moral Satires would have sunk into oblivion if they had not been buoyed up by *The Task*.

CHAPTER V.

THE TASK.

Mrs. Unwin's influence produced the Moral Satires. *The Task* was born of a more potent inspiration. One day Mrs. Jones, the wife of a neighbouring clergyman, came into Olney to shop, and with her came her sister, Lady Austen, the widow of a Baronet, a woman of the world, who had lived much in France, gay, sparkling and vivacious, but at the same time full of feeling even to overflowing. The apparition acted like magic on the recluse. He desired Mrs. Unwin to ask the two ladies to stay to tea; then shrank from joining the party which he had himself invited; ended by joining it, and, his shyness giving way with a rush, engaged in animated conversation with Lady Austen, and walked with her part of the way home. On her an equally great effect appears to have been produced. A warm friendship at once sprang up, and before long Lady Austen had verses addressed to her as Sister Anne. Her ladyship, on her part, was smitten with a great love of retirement, and at the same time with great admiration for Mr. Scott, the curate of Olney, as a preacher, and she resolved to fit up for herself "that part of our great building which is at present occupied by Dick Coleman, his wife and child, and a thousand rats." That a woman of fashion, accustomed to French salons, should choose such an abode, with a pair of Puritans for her only soci-

ety, seems to show that one of the Puritans at least must have possessed great powers of attraction. Better quarters were found for her in the Vicarage; and the private way between the gardens, which apparently had been closed since Newton's departure, was opened again.

Lady Austen's presence evidently wrought on Cowper like an elixir: "From a scene of the most uninterrupted retirement," he writes to Mrs. Unwin, "we have passed at once into a state of constant engagement. Not that our society is much multiplied; the addition of an individual has made all this difference. Lady Austen and we pass our days alternately at each other's Chateau. In the morning I walk with one or other of the ladies, and in the evening wind thread. Thus did Hercules, and thus probably did Samson, and thus do I; and, were both those heroes living, I should not fear to challenge them to a trial of skill in that business, or doubt to beat them both." It was, perhaps, while he was winding thread that Lady Austen told him the story of John Gilpin. He lay awake at night laughing over it, and next morning produced the ballad. It soon became famous, and was recited by Henderson, a popular actor, on the stage, though, as its gentility was doubtful, its author withheld his name. He afterwards fancied that this wonderful piece of humour had been written in a mood of the deepest depression. Probably he had written it in an interval of high spirits between two such moods. Moreover, he sometimes exaggerated his own misery. He will begin a letter with a *de profundis*, and towards the end forget his sorrows, glide into commonplace topics, and write about them in the ordinary strain. Lady Austen inspired *John Gilpin*. She inspired, it seems, the lines on the loss of the Royal George. She did more: she invited Cowper to try his

hand at something considerable in blank verse. When he asked her for a subject, she was happier in her choice than the lady who had suggested the *Progress of Error*. She bade him take the sofa on which she was reclining, and which, sofas being then uncommon, was a more striking and suggestive object than it would be now. The right chord was struck; the subject was accepted; and *The Sofa* grew into *The Task;* the title of the song reminding us that it was "commanded by the fair." As *Paradise Lost* is to militant Puritanism, so is *The Task* to the religious movement of its author's time. To its character as the poem of a sect it no doubt owed and still owes much of its popularity. Not only did it give beautiful and effective expression to the sentiments of a large religious party, but it was about the only poetry that a strict Methodist or Evangelical could read; while to those whose worship was unritualistic, and who were debarred by their principles from the theatre and the concert, anything in the way of art that was not illicit must have been eminently welcome. But *The Task* has merits of a more universal and enduring kind. Its author himself says of it:—"If the work cannot boast a regular plan (in which respect, however, I do not think it altogether indefensible), it may yet boast that the reflections are naturally suggested always by the preceding passage, and that, except the fifth book, which is rather of a political aspect, the whole has one tendency, to discountenance the modern enthusiasm after a London life, and to recommend rural ease and leisure as friendly to the cause of piety and virtue." A regular plan, assuredly, *The Task* has not. It rambles through a vast variety of subjects, religious, political, social, philosophical, and horticultural, with as little of method as its author used in taking his morning walks.

Nor, as Mr. Benham has shown, are the reflections, as a rule, naturally suggested by the preceding passage. From the use of a sofa by the gouty to those who, being free from gout, do not need sofas — and so to country walks and country life, is hardly a natural transition. It is hardly a natural transition from the ice palace built by a Russian despot, to despotism and politics in general. But if Cowper deceives himself in fancying that there is a plan or a close connexion of parts, he is right as to the existence of a pervading tendency. The praise of retirement and of country life as most friendly to piety and virtue, is the perpetual refrain of *The Task*, if not its definite theme. From this idea immediately flow the best and the most popular passages: those which please apart from anything peculiar to a religious school; those which keep the poem alive; those which have found their way into the heart of the nation, and intensified the taste for rural and domestic happiness, to which they most winningly appeal. In these Cowper pours out his inmost feelings, with the liveliness of exhilaration, enhanced by contrast with previous misery. The pleasures of the country and of home—the walk, the garden, but above all the "intimate delights" of the winter evening, the snug parlour, with its close-drawn curtains shutting out the stormy night, the steaming and bubbling tea-urn, the cheerful circle, the book read aloud, the newspaper through which we look out into the unquiet world—are painted by the writer with a heartfelt enjoyment which infects the reader. These are not the joys of a hero, nor are they the joys of an Alcæus "singing amidst the clash of arms, or when he had moored on the wet shore his storm-tost barque." But they are pure joys, and they present themselves in competition with those of Ranelagh and the Basset Table, which

are not heroic or even masculine, any more than they are pure.

The well-known passages at the opening of *The Winter Evening* are the self-portraiture of a soul in bliss—such bliss as that soul could know—and the poet would have found it very difficult to depict to himself by the utmost effort of his religious imagination any paradise which he would really have enjoyed more.

"Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.

* * * *

This folio of four pages, happy work!
Which not even critics criticise, that holds
Inquisitive attention while I read
Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,
Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break,
What is it but a map of busy life,
Its fluctuations and its vast concerns?

* * * *

'Tis pleasant through the loop-holes of retreat
To peep at such a world. To see the stir
Of the great Babel and not feel the crowd.
To hear the roar she sends through all her gates
At a safe distance, where the dying sound
Falls a soft murmur on the injured ear.
Thus sitting and surveying thus at ease
The globe and its concerns, I seem advanced
To some secure and more than mortal height,
That liberates and exempts me from them all.

It turns submitted to my view, turns round
With all its generations; I behold
The tumult and am still. The sound of war
Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me,
Grieves but alarms me not. I mourn the pride
And avarice that make man a wolf to man,
Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats
By which he speaks the language of his heart,
And sigh, but never tremble at the sound.
He travels and expatiates, as the bee
From flower to flower, so he from land to land;
The manners, customs, policy of all
Pay contribution to the store he gleans;
He sucks intelligence in every clime,
And spreads the honey of his deep research
At his return, a rich repast for me.
He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,
Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes
Discover countries, with a kindred heart
Suffer his woes and share in his escapes,
While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.
Oh, winter! ruler of the inverted year,
Thy scatter'd hair with sleet like ashes fill'd,
Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fringed with a beard made white with other snows
Than those of age; thy forehead wrapt in clouds,
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
A sliding car indebted to no wheels,
And urged by storms along its slippery way;
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,
And dreaded as thou art. Thou hold'st the sun
A prisoner in the yet undawning East,
Shortening his journey between morn and noon,
And hurrying him impatient of his stay
Down to the rosy West. But kindly still

> Compensating his loss with added hours
> Of social converse and instructive ease,
> And gathering at short notice in one group
> The family dispersed by daylight and its cares.
> I crown thee king of intimate delights,
> Fireside enjoyments, home-born happiness,
> And all the comforts that the lowly roof
> Of undisturb'd retirement, and the hours
> Of long uninterrupted evening know."

The writer of *The Task* also deserves the crown which he has himself claimed as a close observer and truthful painter of nature. In this respect, he challenges comparison with Thomson. The range of Thomson is far wider; he paints nature in all her moods, Cowper only in a few, and those the gentlest, though he has said of himself that "he was always an admirer of thunder-storms, even before he knew whose voice he heard in them, but especially of thunder rolling over the great waters." The great waters he had not seen for many years; he had never, so far as we know, seen mountains, hardly even high hills; his only landscape was the flat country watered by the Ouse. On the other hand, he is perfectly genuine, thoroughly English, entirely emancipated from false Arcadianism, the yoke of which still sits heavily upon Thomson, whose "muse," moreover, is perpetually "wafting" him away from the country and the climate which he knows to countries and climates which he does not know, and which he describes in the style of a prize poem. Cowper's landscapes, too, are peopled with the peasantry of England; Thomson's, with Damons, Palæmons, and Musidoras, tricked out in the sentimental costume of the sham idyl. In Thomson, you always find the effort of the artist working up a description; in Cowper, you find no effort; the scene

is simply mirrored on a mind of great sensibility and high pictorial power.

"And witness, dear companion of my walks,
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
Fast lock'd in mine, with pleasure such as love,
Confirm'd by long experience of thy worth
And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire—
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.
Thou know'st my praise of nature most sincere,
And that my raptures are not conjured up
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
But genuine, and art partner of them all.
How oft upon yon eminence our pace
Has slacken'd to a pause, and we have borne
The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew,
While Admiration, feeding at the eye,
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene!
Thence with what pleasure have we just discerned
The distant plough slow moving, and beside
His labouring team that swerved not from the track,
The sturdy swain diminish'd to a boy!
Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
Of spacious meads, with cattle sprinkled o'er,
Conducts the eye along his sinuous course
Delighted. There, fast rooted in their bank,
Stand, never overlook'd, our favourite elms,
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut;
While far beyond, and overthwart the stream,
That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale,
The sloping land recedes into the clouds;
Displaying on its varied side the grace
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tower,
Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
Just undulates upon the listening ear,
Groves, heaths, and smoking villages, remote.

Scenes must be beautiful, which, daily viewed,
Please daily, and whose novelty survives
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years—
Praise justly due to those that I describe."

This is evidently genuine and spontaneous. We stand with Cowper and Mrs. Unwin on the hill in the ruffling wind, like them, scarcely conscious that it blows, and feed admiration at the eye upon the rich and thoroughly English champaign that is outspread below.

"Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds,
Exhilarate the spirit, and restore
The tone of languid Nature. Mighty winds,
That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood
Of ancient growth, make music not unlike
The dash of Ocean on his winding shore,
And lull the spirit while they fill the mind;
Unnumber'd branches waving in the blast,
And all their leaves fast fluttering, all at once.
Nor less composure waits upon the roar
Of distant floods, or on the softer voice
Of neighbouring fountain, or of *rills that slip*
Through the cleft rock, and chiming as they fall
Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length
In matted grass that with a livelier green
Betrays the secret of their silent course.
Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,
But animated nature sweeter still,
To soothe and satisfy the human ear.
Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one
The livelong night: nor these alone, whose notes
Nice-finger'd Art must emulate in vain,
But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime
In still-repeated circles, screaming loud,
The jay, the pie, and e'en the boding owl

That hails the rising moon, have charms for me.
Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,
Yet heard in scenes where peace forever reigns,
And only there, please highly for their sake."

Affection such as the last lines display for the inharmonious as well as the harmonious, for the uncomely as well as the comely parts of nature, has been made familiar by Wordsworth, but it was new in the time of Cowper. Let us compare a landscape painted by Pope in his Windsor forest, with the lines just quoted, and we shall see the difference between the art of Cowper and that of the Augustan age.

"Here waving groves a checkered scene display,
And part admit and part exclude the day,
As some coy nymph her lover's warm address
Not quite indulges, nor can quite repress.
There interspersed in lawns and opening glades
The trees arise that share each other's shades;
Here in full light the russet plains extend,
There wrapt in clouds, the bluish hills ascend,
E'en the wild heath displays her purple dyes,
And midst the desert fruitful fields arise,
That crowned with tufted trees and springing corn,
Like verdant isles the sable waste adorn."

The low Berkshire hills wrapt in clouds on a sunny day; a sable desert in the neighbourhood of Windsor; fruitful fields arising in it, and crowned with tufted trees and springing corn—evidently Pope saw all this, not on an eminence, in the ruffling wind, but in his study with his back to the window, and the Georgics or a translation of them before him.

Here, again, is a little picture of rural life from the *Winter Morning Walk.*

"The cattle mourn in corners, where the fence
Screens them, and seem half-petrified to sleep
In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
Their wonted fodder; not like hungering man,
Fretful if unsupplied; but silent, meek,
And patient of the slow-paced swain's delay.
He from the stack carves out the accustomed load.
Deep-plunging, and again deep plunging oft,
His broad keen knife into the solid mass:
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,
With such undeviating and even force
He severs it away: no needless care,
Lest storms should overset the leaning pile
Deciduous, or its own unbalanced weight.
Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcern'd
The cheerful haunts of man; to wield the axe
And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,
From morn to eve, his solitary task.
Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears
And tail cropp'd short, half lurcher and half cur,
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow; and now, with many a frisk
Wide-scampering, snatches up the drifted snow
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout;
Then shakes his powder'd coat, and barks for joy.
Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl
Moves right toward the mark; nor stops for aught,
But now and then with pressure of his thumb
To adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube,
That fumes beneath his nose: the trailing cloud
Streams far behind him, scenting all the air."

The minutely faithful description of the man carving the load of hay out of the stack, and again those of the gambolling dog, and the woodman smoking his pipe with the stream of smoke trailing behind him, remind us of the

touches of minute fidelity in Homer. The same may be said of many other passages.

> "The sheepfold here
> Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.
> *At first, progressive as a stream they seek*
> *The middle field; but, scatter'd by degrees,*
> *Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land.*
> There from the sun-burnt hay-field homeward creeps
> *The loaded wain; while lighten'd of its charge,*
> *The wain that meets it passes swiftly by;*
> The boorish driver leaning o'er his team
> Vociferous and impatient of delay."

A specimen of more imaginative and distinctly poetical description is the well-known passage on evening, in writing which Cowper would seem to have had Collins in his mind.

> "Come, Evening, once again, season of peace;
> Return, sweet Evening, and continue long!
> Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,
> With matron-step slow-moving, while the Night
> Treads on thy sweeping train; one hand employed
> In letting fall the curtain of repose
> On bird and beast, the other charged for man
> With sweet oblivion of the cares of day:
> Not sumptuously adorn'd, nor needing aid,
> Like homely-featured Night, of clustering gems!
> A star or two just twinkling on thy brow
> Suffices thee; save that the moon is thine
> No less than hers, not worn indeed on high
> With ostentatious pageantry, but set
> With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,
> Resplendent less, but of an ampler round."

Beyond this line Cowper does not go, and had no idea

of going; he never thinks of lending a soul to material nature as Wordsworth and Shelley do. He is the poetic counterpart of Gainsborough, as the great descriptive poets of a later and more spiritual day are the counterparts of Turner. We have said that Cowper's peasants are genuine as well as his landscape; he might have been a more exquisite Crabbe if he had turned his mind that way, instead of writing sermons about a world which to him was little more than an abstraction, distorted, moreover, and discoloured by his religious asceticism.

"Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat,
Such claim compassion in a night like this,
And have a friend in every feeling heart.
Warm'd, while it lasts, by labour, all day long
They brave the season, and yet find at eve,
Ill clad, and fed but sparely, time to cool.
The frugal housewife trembles when she lights
Her scanty stock of brushwood, blazing clear,
But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys.
The few small embers left, she nurses well;
And, while her infant race, with outspread hands
And crowded knees sit cowering o'er the sparks,
Retires, content to quake, so they be warm'd.
The man feels least, as more inured than she
To winter, and the current in his veins
More briskly moved by his severer toil;
Yet he, too, finds his own distress in theirs.
The taper soon extinguish'd, which I saw
Dangled along at the cold finger's end
Just when the day declined; and the brown loaf
Lodged on the shelf, half eaten without sauce
Of savoury cheese, or butter, costlier still:
Sleep seems their only refuge: for, alas!
Where penury is felt the thought is chained,

And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few!
With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care
Ingenious Parsimony takes, but just
Saves the small inventory, bed and stool,
Skillet, and old carved chest, from public sale.
They live, and live without extorted alms
From grudging hands: but other boast have none
To soothe their honest pride that scorns to beg,
Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love."

Here we have the plain, unvarnished record of visitings among the poor of Olney. The last two lines are simple truth as well as the rest.

"In some passages, especially in the second book, you will observe me very satirical." In the second book of *The Task* there are some bitter things about the clergy; and in the passage pourtraying a fashionable preacher, there is a touch of satiric vigour, or rather of that power of comic description which was one of the writer's gifts. But of Cowper as a satirist enough has been said.

"What there is of a religious cast in the volume I have thrown towards the end of it, for two reasons; first, that I might not revolt the reader at his entrance; and, secondly, that my best impressions might be made last. Were I to write as many volumes as Lope de Vega or Voltaire, not one of them would be without this tincture. If the world like it not, so much the worse for them. I make all the concessions I can, that I may please them, but I will not please them at the expense of conscience." The passages of *The Task* penned by conscience, taken together, form a lamentably large proportion of the poem. An ordinary reader can be carried through them, if at all, only by his interest in the history of opinion, or by the companionship of the writer, who is always present, as Walton is in

his Angler, as White is in his Selbourne. Cowper, however, even at his worst, is a highly cultivated Methodist: if he is sometimes enthusiastic, and possibly superstitious, he is never coarse or unctuous. He speaks with contempt of "the twang of the conventicle." Even his enthusiasm had by this time been somewhat tempered. Just after his conversion he used to preach to everybody. He had found out, as he tells us himself, that this was a mistake, that "the pulpit was for preaching; the garden, the parlour, and the walk abroad were for friendly and agreeable conversation." It may have been his consciousness of a certain change in himself that deterred him from taking Newton into his confidence when he was engaged upon *The Task*. The worst passages are those which betray a fanatical antipathy to natural science, especially that in the third book (150–190). The episode of the judgment of Heaven on the young atheist Misagathus, in the sixth book, is also fanatical and repulsive.

Puritanism had come into violent collision with the temporal power, and had contracted a character fiercely political and revolutionary. Methodism fought only against unbelief, vice, and the coldness of the Establishment; it was in no way political, much less revolutionary; by the recoil from the atheism of the French Revolution, its leaders, including Wesley himself, were drawn rather to the Tory side. Cowper, we have said, always remained in principle what he had been born, a Whig, an unrevolutionary Whig, an "Old Whig," to adopt the phrase made canonical by Burke.

> "'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
> Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,
> And we are weeds without it. All constraint
> Except what wisdom lays on evil men
> Is evil."

The sentiment of these lines, which were familiar and dear to Cobden, is tempered by judicious professions of loyalty to a king who rules in accordance with the law. At one time Cowper was inclined to regard the government of George III. as a repetition of that of Charles I., absolutist in the State and reactionary in the Church; but the progress of revolutionary opinions evidently increased his loyalty, as it did that of many other Whigs, to the good Tory king. We shall presently see, however, that the views of the French Revolution itself expressed in his letters are wonderfully rational, calm, and free from the political panic and the apocalyptic hallucination, both of which we should rather have expected to find in him. He describes himself to Newton as having seen, since his second attack of madness, "an extramundane character with reference to this globe, and though not a native of the moon, not made of the dust of this planet." The Evangelical party has remained down to the present day non-political, and in its own estimation extramundane, taking part in the affairs of the nation only when some religious object was directly in view. In speaking of the family of nations, an Evangelical poet is of course a preacher of peace and human brotherhood. He has even in some lines of *Charity*, which also were dear to Cobden, remarkably anticipated the sentiment of modern economists respecting the influence of free trade in making one nation of mankind. The passage is defaced by an atrociously bad simile:—

"Again—the band of commerce was design'd,
To associate all the branches of mankind,
And if a boundless plenty be the robe,
Trade is the golden girdle of the globe.
Wise to promote whatever end he means,
God opens fruitful Nature's various scenes,

Each climate needs what other climes produce,
And offers something to the general use;
No land but listens to the common call,
And in return receives supply from all.
This genial intercourse and mutual aid
Cheers what were else an universal shade,
Calls Nature from her ivy-mantled den,
And softens human rock-work into men."

Now and then, however, in reading *The Task*, we come across a dash of warlike patriotism which, amidst the general philanthropy, surprises and offends the reader's palate, like the taste of garlic in our butter.

An innocent Epicurism, tempered by religious asceticism of a mild kind—such is the philosophy of *The Task*, and such the ideal embodied in the portrait of the happy man with which it concludes. Whatever may be said of the religious asceticism, the Epicurism required a corrective to redeem it from selfishness and guard it against self-deceit. This solitary was serving humanity in the best way he could, not by his prayers, as in one rather fanatical passage he suggests, but by his literary work; he had need also to remember that humanity was serving him. The newspaper through which he looks out so complacently into the great "Babel," has been printed in the great Babel itself, and brought by the poor postman, with his "spattered boots, strapped waist, and frozen locks," to the recluse sitting comfortably by his fireside. The "fragrant lymph" poured by "the fair" for their companion in his cosy seclusion, has been brought over the sea by the trader, who must encounter the moral dangers of a trader's life, as well as the perils of the stormy wave. It is delivered at the door by

"The waggoner who bears
The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,

> With half-shut eyes and puckered cheeks and teeth
> Presented bare against the storm;"

and whose coarseness and callousness, as he whips his team, are the consequences of the hard calling in which he ministers to the recluse's pleasure and refinement. If town life has its evils, from the city comes all that makes retirement comfortable and civilized. Retirement without the city would have been bookless, and have fed on acorns.

Rousseau is conscious of the necessity of some such institution as slavery, by way of basis for his beautiful life according to nature. The celestial purity and felicity of St. Pierre's *Paul and Virginia* are sustained by the labour of two faithful slaves. A weak point of Cowper's philosophy, taken apart from his own saving activity as a poet, betrays itself in a somewhat similar way.

> "Or if the garden with its many cares
> All well repaid demand him, he attends
> The welcome call, conscious how much the hand
> Of lubbard labour needs his watchful eye,
> Oft loitering lazily if not o'erseen;
> Or misapplying his unskilful strength
> But much performs himself, *no works indeed*
> *That ask robust tough sinews bred to toil,*
> *Servile employ*, but such as may amuse,
> Not tire, demanding rather skill than force."

We are told in *The Task* that there is no sin in allowing our own happiness to be enhanced by contrast with the less happy condition of others: if we are doing our best to increase the happiness of others, there is none. Cowper, as we have said before, was doing this to the utmost of his limited capacity.

Both in the Moral Satires and in *The Task*, there are sweeping denunciations of amusements which we now justly deem innocent, and without which, or something equivalent to them, the wrinkles on the brow of care could not be smoothed, nor life preserved from dulness and moroseness. There is fanaticism in this, no doubt; but in justice to the Methodist as well as to the Puritan, let it be remembered that the stage, card parties, and even dancing, once had in them something from which even the most liberal morality might recoil.

In his writings generally, but especially in *The Task*, Cowper, besides being an apostle of virtuous retirement and evangelical piety, is, by his general tone, an apostle of sensibility. *The Task* is a perpetual protest not only against the fashionable vices and the irreligion but against the hardness of the world; and in a world which worshipped Chesterfield the protest was not needless, nor was it ineffective. Among the most tangible characteristics of this special sensibility is the tendency of its brimming love of humankind to overflow upon animals: and of this there are marked instances in some passages of *The Task*.

> "I would not enter on my list of friends
> (Though graced with polished manners and fine sense,
> Yet wanting sensibility) the man
> Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm."

Of Cowper's sentimentalism (to use the word in a neutral sense), part flowed from his own temperament, part was Evangelical, but part belonged to an element which was European, which produced the *Nouvelle Heloise* and the *Sorrows of Werther*, and which was found among the Jacobins in sinister companionship with the cruel frenzy of the Revolution. Cowper shows us several times that

he had been a reader of Rousseau, nor did he fail to produce in his time a measure of the same effect which Rousseau produced; though there have been so many sentimentalists since, and the vein has been so much worked, that it is difficult to carry ourselves back in imagination to the day in which Parisian ladies could forego balls to read the *Nouvelle Heloise*, or the stony heart of people of the world could be melted by *The Task*.

In his versification, as in his descriptions, Cowper flattered himself that he imitated no one. But he manifestly imitates the softer passages of Milton, whose music he compares in a rapturous passage of one of his letters to that of a fine organ. To produce melody and variety, he, like Milton, avails himself fully of all the resources of a composite language. Blank verse confined to short Anglo-Saxon words is apt to strike the ear, not like the swell of an organ, but like the tinkle of a musical-box.

The Task made Cowper famous. He was told that he had sixty readers at the Hague alone. The interest of his relations and friends in him revived, and those of whom he had heard nothing for many years emulously renewed their connexion. Colman and Thurlow reopened their correspondence with him, Colman writing to him "like a brother." Disciples—young Mr. Rose, for instance—came to sit at his feet. Complimentary letters were sent to him, and poems submitted to his judgment. His portrait was taken by famous painters. Literary lion-hunters began to fix their eyes upon him. His renown spread even to Olney. The clerk of All Saints', Northampton, came over to ask him to write the verses annually appended to the bill of mortality for that parish. Cowper suggested that "there were several men of genius in Northampton, particularly Mr. Cox, the statuary, who, as everybody knew,

was a first-rate maker of verses." "Alas!" replied the clerk, "I have heretofore borrowed help from him, but he is a gentleman of so much reading that the people of our town cannot understand him." The compliment was irresistible, and for seven years the author of *The Task* wrote the mortuary verses for All Saints', Northampton. Amusement, not profit, was Cowper's aim; he rather rashly gave away his copyright to his publisher, and his success does not seem to have brought him money in a direct way; but it brought him a pension of 300*l.* in the end. In the meantime it brought him presents, and among them an annual gift of 50*l.* from an anonymous hand, the first instalment being accompanied by a pretty snuff-box ornamented with a picture of the three hares. From the gracefulness of the gift, Southey infers that it came from a woman, and he conjectures that the woman was Theodora.

CHAPTER VI.

SHORT POEMS AND TRANSLATIONS.

The Task was not quite finished when the influence which had inspired it was withdrawn. Among the little mysteries and scandals of literary history is the rupture between Cowper and Lady Austen. Soon after the commencement of their friendship there had been a "fracas," of which Cowper gives an account in a letter to William Unwin. "My letters have already apprised you of that close and intimate connexion that took place between the lady you visited in Queen Anne Street and us. Nothing could be more promising, though sudden in the commencement. She treated us with as much unreservedness of communication, as if we had been born in the same house and educated together. At her departure, she herself proposed a correspondence, and, because writing does not agree with your mother, proposed a correspondence with me. This sort of intercourse had not been long maintained before I discovered, by some slight intimations of it, that she had conceived displeasure at somewhat I had written, though I cannot now recollect it; conscious of none but the most upright, inoffensive intentions, I yet apologized for the passage in question, and the flaw was healed again. Our correspondence after this proceeded smoothly for a considerable time; but at length, having had repeated occasion to observe that she expressed a sort

of romantic idea of our merits, and built such expectations of felicity upon our friendship, as we were sure that nothing human could possibly answer, I wrote to remind her that we were mortal, to recommend her not to think more highly of us than the subject would warrant, and intimating that when we embellish a creature with colors taken from our own fancy, and, so adorned, admire and praise it beyond its real merits, we make it an idol, and have nothing to expect in the end but that it will deceive our hopes, and that we shall derive nothing from it but a painful conviction of our error. Your mother heard me read the letter; she read it herself, and honoured it with her warm approbation. But it gave mortal offence; it received, indeed, an answer, but such an one as I could by no means reply to; and there ended (for it was impossible it should ever be renewed) a friendship that bid fair to be lasting; being formed with a woman whose seeming stability of temper, whose knowledge of the world and great experience of its folly, but, above all, whose sense of religion and seriousness of mind (for with all that gaiety she is a great thinker) induced us both, in spite of that cautious reserve that marked our characters, to trust her, to love and value her, and to open our hearts for her reception. It may be necessary to add that, by her own desire, I wrote to her under the assumed relation of a brother, and she to me as my sister. *Ceu fumus in auras.*" It is impossible to read this without suspecting that there was more of "romance" on one side than there was either of romance or of consciousness of the situation on the other. On that occasion the reconciliation, though "impossible," took place, the lady sending, by way of olive branch, a pair of ruffles, which it was known she had begun to work before the quarrel. The second rupture was final. Hay-

ley, who treats the matter with sad solemnity, tells us that Cowper's letter of farewell to Lady Austen, as she assured him herself, was admirable, though unluckily, not being gratified by it at the time, she had thrown it into the fire. Cowper has himself given us, in a letter to Lady Hesketh, with reference to the final rupture, a version of the whole affair:—"There came a lady into this country, by name and title Lady Austen, the widow of the late Sir Robert Austen. At first she lived with her sister about a mile from Olney; but in a few weeks took lodgings at the Vicarage here. Between the Vicarage and the back of our house are interposed our garden, an orchard, and the garden belonging to the Vicarage. She had lived much in France, was very sensible, and had infinite vivacity. She took a great liking to us, and we to her. She had been used to a great deal of company, and we, fearing that she would feel such a transition into silent retirement irksome, contrived to give her our agreeable company often. Becoming continually more and more intimate, a practice at length obtained of our dining with each other alternately every day, Sundays excepted. In order to facilitate our communication, we made doors in the two garden-walls aforesaid, by which means we considerably shortened the way from one house to the other, and could meet when we pleased without entering the town at all—a measure the rather expedient, because the town is abominably dirty, and she kept no carriage. On her first settlement in our neighbourhood, I made it my own particular business (for at that time I was not employed in writing, having published my first volume and not begun my second) to pay my *devoirs* to her ladyship every morning at eleven. Customs very soon became laws. I began *The Task*, for she was the lady who gave me the *Sofa* for a

subject. Being once engaged in the work, I began to feel the inconvenience of my morning attendance. We had seldom breakfasted ourselves till ten; and the intervening hour was all the time I could find in the whole day for writing, and occasionally it would happen that the half of that hour was all that I could secure for the purpose. But there was no remedy. Long usage had made that which was at first optional a point of good manners, and consequently of necessity, and I was forced to neglect *The Task* to attend upon the Muse who had inspired the subject. But she had ill-health, and before I had quite finished the work was obliged to repair to Bristol." Evidently this was not the whole account of the matter, or there would have been no need for a formal letter of farewell. We are very sorry to find the revered Mr. Alexander Knox saying, in his correspondence with Bishop Jebb, that he had a severer idea of Lady Austen than he should wish to put into writing for publication, and that he almost suspected she was a very artful woman. On the other hand, the unsentimental Mr. Scott is reported to have said, "Who can be surprised that two women should be continually in the society of one man and not quarrel, sooner or later, with each other?" Considering what Mrs. Unwin had been to Cowper, and what he had been to her, a little jealousy on her part would not have been highly criminal. But, as Southey observes, we shall soon see two women continually in the society of this very man without quarrelling with each other. That Lady Austen's behaviour to Mrs. Unwin was in the highest degree affectionate, Cowper has himself assured us. Whatever the cause may have been, this bird of paradise, having alighted for a moment in Olney, took wing and was seen no more.

Her place as a companion was supplied, and more than supplied, by Lady Hesketh, like her a woman of the world, and almost as bright and vivacious, but with more sense and stability of character, and who, moreover, could be treated as a sister without any danger of misunderstanding. The renewal of the intercourse between Cowper and the merry and affectionate play-fellow of his early days, had been one of the best fruits borne to him by *The Task*, or perhaps we should rather say by *John Gilpin;* for on reading that ballad she first became aware that her cousin had emerged from the dark seclusion of his truly Christian happiness, and might again be capable of intercourse with her sunny nature. Full of real happiness for Cowper were her visits to Olney; the announcement of her coming threw him into a trepidation of delight. And how was this new rival received by Mrs. Unwin? "There is something," says Lady Hesketh, in a letter which has been already quoted, "truly affectionate and sincere in Mrs. Unwin's manner. No one can express more heartily than she does her joy to have me at Olney; and as this must be for his sake, it is an additional proof of her regard and esteem for him." She could even cheerfully yield precedence in trifles, which is the greatest trial of all. "Our friend," says Lady Hesketh, "delights in a large table and a large chair. There are two of the latter comforts in my parlour. I am sorry to say that he and I always spread ourselves out in them, leaving poor Mrs. Unwin to find all the comfort she can in a small one, half as high again as ours, and considerably harder than marble. However, she protests it is what she likes, that she prefers a high chair to a low one, and a hard to a soft one; and I hope she is sincere; indeed, I am persuaded she is." She never gave the slightest reason for doubting her sincerity; so

Mr. Scott's coarse theory of the "two women" falls to the ground; though, as Lady Hesketh was not Lady Austen, room is still left for the more delicate and interesting hypothesis.

By Lady Hesketh's care Cowper was at last taken out of the "well" at Olney and transferred, with his partner, to a house at Weston, a place in the neighbourhood, but on higher ground, more cheerful, and in better air. The house at Weston belonged to Mr. Throckmorton, of Weston Hall, with whom and Mrs. Throckmorton, Cowper had become so intimate that they were already his Mr. and Mrs. Frog. It is a proof of his freedom from fanatical bitterness that he was rather drawn to them by their being Roman Catholics, and having suffered rude treatment from the Protestant boors of the neighbourhood. Weston Hall had its grounds, with the colonnade of chestnuts, the "sportive light" of which still "dances" on the pages of *The Task;* with the Wilderness,—

> "Whose well-rolled walks,
> With curvature of slow and easy sweep,
> Deception innocent, give ample space
> To narrow bounds—"

with the Grove,—

> "Between the upright shafts of whose tall elms
> We may discern the thresher at his task,
> Thump after thump resounds the constant flail
> That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls
> Full on the destined ear. Wide flies the chaff,
> The rustling straw sends up a fragrant mist
> Of atoms, sparkling in the noonday beam."

A pretty little vignette, which the threshing-machine has now made antique. There were ramblings, picnics, and

little dinner-parties. Lady Hesketh kept a carriage. Gayhurst, the seat of Mr. Wright, was visited, as well as Weston Hall; the life of the lonely pair was fast becoming social. The Rev. John Newton was absent in the flesh, but he was present in the spirit, thanks to the tattle of Olney. To show that he was, he addressed to Mrs. Unwin a letter of remonstrance on the serious change which had taken place in the habits of his spiritual children. It was answered by her companion, who in repelling the censure mingles the dignity of self-respect with a just appreciation of the censor's motives, in a style which showed that although he was sometimes mad, he was not a fool.

Having succeeded in one great poem, Cowper thought of writing another, and several subjects were started—*The Mediterranean*, *The Four Ages of Man*, *Yardley Oak*. *The Mediterranean* would not have suited him well if it was to be treated historically, for of history he was even more ignorant than most of those who have had the benefit of a classical education, being capable of believing that the Latin element of our language had come in with the Roman conquest. Of the *Four Ages* he wrote a fragment. Of *Yardley Oak* he wrote the opening; it was, apparently, to have been a survey of the countries in connexion with an immemorial oak which stood in a neighbouring chace. But he was forced to say that the mind of man was not a fountain but a cistern, and his was a broken one. He had expended his stock of materials for a long poem in *The Task*.

These, the sunniest days of Cowper's life, however, gave birth to many of those short poems which are perhaps his best, certainly his most popular works, and which will probably keep his name alive when *The Task* is read only in extracts. *The Loss of the Royal George*, *The Solitude*

of Alexander Selkirk, *The Poplar Field*, *The Shrubbery*, the *Lines on a Young Lady*, and those *To Mary*, will hold their places forever in the treasury of English Lyrics. In its humble way *The Needless Alarm* is one of the most perfect of human compositions. Cowper had reason to complain of Æsop for having written his fables before him. One great charm of these little pieces is their perfect spontaneity. Many of them were never published; and generally they have the air of being the simple effusions of the moment, gay or sad. When Cowper was in good spirits his joy, intensified by sensibility and past suffering, played like a fountain of light on all the little incidents of his quiet life. An ink-glass, a flatting mill, a halibut served up for dinner, the killing of a snake in the garden, the arrival of a friend wet after a journey, a cat shut up in a drawer, sufficed to elicit a little jet of poetical delight, the highest and brightest jet of all being *John Gilpin*. Lady Austen's voice and touch still faintly live in two or three pieces which were written for her harpsichord. Some of the short poems, on the other hand, are poured from the darker urn, and the finest of them all is the saddest. There is no need of illustrations unless it be to call attention to a secondary quality less noticed than those of more importance. That which used to be specially called "wit," the faculty of ingenious and unexpected combination, such as is shown in the similes of *Hudibras*, was possessed by Cowper in large measure.

> "A friendship that in frequent fits
> Of controversial rage emits
> The sparks of disputation,
> Like hand-in-hand insurance plates,
> Most unavoidably creates
> The thought of conflagration.

"Some fickle creatures boast a soul
True as a needle to the pole,
Their humour yet so various—
They manifest their whole life through
The needle's deviations too,
Their love is so precarious.

"The great and small but rarely meet
On terms of amity complete;
Plebeians must surrender,
And yield so much to noble folk,
It is combining fire with smoke,
Obscurity with splendour.

"Some are so placid and serene
(As Irish bogs are always green),
They sleep secure from waking;
And are indeed a bog, that bears
Your unparticipated cares
Unmoved and without quaking.

"Courtier and patriot cannot mix
Their heterogeneous politics
Without an effervescence,
Like that of salts with lemon juice,
Which does not yet like that produce
A friendly coalescence."

Faint presages of Byron are heard in such a poem as *The Shrubbery;* and of Wordsworth in such a poem as that *To a Young Lady.* But of the lyrical depth and passion of the great Revolution poets Cowper is wholly devoid. His soul was stirred by no movement so mighty, if it were even capable of the impulse. Tenderness he has, and pathos as well as playfulness; he has unfailing grace and ease; he has clearness like that of a trout-stream. Fash-

ions, even our fashions, change. The more metaphysical poetry of our time has indeed too much in it, besides the metaphysics, to be in any danger of being ever laid on the shelf with the once admired conceits of Cowley; yet it may one day in part lose, while the easier and more limpid kind of poetry may in part regain, its charm.

The opponents of the Slave Trade tried to enlist this winning voice in the service of their cause. Cowper disliked the task, but he wrote two or three anti-Slave-Trade ballads. *The Slave Trader in the Dumps*, with its ghastly array of horrors dancing a jig to a ballad metre, justifies the shrinking of an artist from a subject hardly fit for art.

If the cistern which had supplied *The Task* was exhausted, the rill of occasional poems still ran freely, fed by a spring which, so long as life presented the most trivial object or incident, could not fail. Why did not Cowper go on writing these charming pieces, which he evidently produced with the greatest facility? Instead of this, he took, under an evil star, to translating Homer. The translation of Homer into verse is the Polar Expedition of literature, always failing, yet still desperately renewed. Homer defies modern reproduction. His primeval simplicity is a dew of the dawn which can never be re-distilled. His primeval savagery is almost equally unpresentable. What civilized poet can don the barbarian sufficiently to revel, or seem to revel, in the ghastly details of carnage, in hideous wounds described with surgical gusto, in the butchery of captives in cold blood, or even in those particulars of the shambles and the spit which to the troubadour of barbarism seem as delightful as the images of the harvest and the vintage? Poetry can be translated into poetry only by taking up the ideas of the original into the mind of the translator, which is very difficult when the translator

and the original are separated by a gulf of thought and feeling, and when the gulf is very wide, becomes impossible. There is nothing for it in the case of Homer but a prose translation. Even in prose to find perfect equivalents for some of the Homeric phrases is not easy. Whatever the chronological date of the Homeric poems may be, their political and psychological date may be pretty well fixed. Politically they belong, as the episode of Thersites shows, to the rise of democracy and to its first collision with aristocracy, which Homer regards with the feelings of a bard who sang in aristocratic halls. Psychologically they belong to the time when, in ideas and language, the moral was just disengaging itself from the physical. In the wail of Andromache, for instance, *adinon epos*, which Pope improves into "sadly dear," and Cowper, with better taste at all events, renders "precious," is really semi-physical, and scarcely capable of exact translation. It belongs to an unreproducible past, like the fierce joy which, in the same wail, bursts from the savage woman in the midst of her desolation at the thought of the numbers whom her husband's hands had slain. Cowper had studied the Homeric poems thoroughly in his youth; he knew them so well that he was able to translate them, not very incorrectly with only the help of a Clavis; he understood their peculiar qualities as well as it was possible for a reader without the historic sense to do; he had compared Pope's translation carefully with the original, and had decisively noted the defects which make it not a version of Homer, but a periwigged epic of the Augustan age. In his own translation he avoids Pope's faults, and he preserves at least the dignity of the original, while his command of language could never fail him, nor could he ever lack the guidance of good taste. But we well know

where he will be at his best. We turn at once to such passages as the description of Calypso's Isle.

"Alighting on Pieria, down he (Hermes) stooped
To Ocean, and the billows lightly skimmed
In form a sea-mew, such as in the bays
Tremendous of the barren deep her food
Seeking, dips oft in brine her ample wing.
In such disguise o'er many a wave he rode,
But reaching, now, that isle remote, forsook
The azure deep, and at the spacious grove
Where dwelt the amber-tressed nymph arrived
Found her within. A fire on all the hearth
Blazed sprightly, and, afar diffused, the scent
Of smooth-split cedar and of cypress-wood
Odorous, burning cheered the happy isle.
She, busied at the loom and plying fast
Her golden shuttle, with melodious voice
Sat chanting there; a grove on either side,
Alder and poplar, and the redolent branch
Wide-spread of cypress, skirted dark the cave
Where many a bird of broadest pinion built
Secure her nest, the owl, the kite, and daw,
Long-tongued frequenters of the sandy shores.
A garden vine luxuriant on all sides
Mantled the spacious cavern, cluster-hung
Profuse; four fountains of serenest lymph,
Their sinuous course pursuing side by side,
Strayed all around, and everywhere appeared
Meadows of softest verdure purpled o'er
With violets; it was a scene to fill
A God from heaven with wonder and delight."

There are faults in this, and even blunders, notably in the natural history; and "serenest lymph" is a sad departure from Homeric simplicity. Still, on the whole, the

passage in the translation charms, and its charm is tolerably identical with that of the original. In more martial and stirring passages the failure is more signal, and here especially we feel that if Pope's rhyming couplets are sorry equivalents for the Homeric hexameter, blank verse is superior to them only in a negative way. The real equivalent, if any, is the romance metre of Scott, parts of whose poems, notably the last canto of *Marmion* and some passages in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, are about the most Homeric things in our language. Cowper brought such poetic gifts to his work that his failure might have deterred others from making the same hopeless attempt. But a failure his work is; the translation is no more a counterpart of the original, than the Ouse creeping through its meadows is the counterpart of the Ægean rolling before a fresh wind and under a bright sun. Pope delights school-boys; Cowper delights nobody, though, on the rare occasions when he is taken from the shelf, he commends himself, in a certain measure, to the taste and judgment of cultivated men.

In his translations of Horace, both those from the Satires and those from the Odes, Cowper succeeds far better. Horace requires in his translator little of the fire which Cowper lacked. In the Odes he requires grace, in the Satires urbanity and playfulness, all of which Cowper had in abundance. Moreover, Horace is separated from us by no intellectual gulf. He belongs to what Dr. Arnold called the modern period of ancient history. Nor is Cowper's translation of part of the eighth book of Virgil's Æneid bad, in spite of the heaviness of the blank verse. Virgil, like Horace, is within his intellectual range.

As though a translation of the whole of the Homeric poems had not been enough to bury his finer faculty, and

prevent him from giving us any more of the minor poems, the publishers seduced him into undertaking an edition of Milton, which was to eclipse all its predecessors in splendour. Perhaps he may have been partly entrapped by a chivalrous desire to rescue his idol from the disparagement cast on it by the tasteless and illiberal Johnson. The project, after weighing on his mind and spirits for some time, was abandoned, leaving as its traces only translations of Milton's Latin poems, and a few notes on *Paradise Lost*, in which there is too much of religion, too little of art.

Lady Hesketh had her eye on the Laureateship, and probably with that view persuaded her cousin to write loyal verses on the recovery of George III. He wrote the verses, but to the hint of the Laureateship he said, "Heaven guard my brows from the wreath you mention, whatever wreaths beside may hereafter adorn them. It would be a leaden extinguisher clapt on my genius, and I should never more produce a line worth reading." Besides, was he not already the mortuary poet of All Saints, Northampton?

CHAPTER VII.

THE LETTERS.

Southey, no mean judge in such a matter, calls Cowper the best of English letter-writers. If the first place is shared with him by any one it is by Byron, rather than by Gray, whose letters are pieces of fine writing, addressed to literary men, or Horace Walpole, whose letters are memoirs, the English counterpart of St. Simon. The letters both of Gray and Walpole are manifestly written for publication. Those of Cowper have the true epistolary charm. They are conversation, perfectly artless, and at the same time autobiography, perfectly genuine; whereas all formal autobiography is cooked. They are the vehicles of the writer's thoughts and feelings, and the mirror of his life. We have the strongest proofs that they were not written for publication. In many of them there are outpourings of wretchedness which could not possibly have been intended for any heart but that to which they were addressed, while others contain medical details which no one would have thought of presenting to the public eye. Some, we know, were answers to letters received but a moment before; and Southey says that the manuscripts are very free from erasures. Though Cowper kept a notebook for subjects, which no doubt were scarce with him, it is manifest that he did not premeditate. Grace of form

he never lacks, but this was a part of his nature, improved by his classical training. The character and the thoughts presented are those of a recluse who was sometimes a hypochondriac; the life is life at Olney. But simple self-revelation is always interesting, and a garrulous playfulness with great happiness of expression can lend a certain charm even to things most trivial and commonplace. There is also a certain pleasure in being carried back to the quiet days before railways and telegraphs, when people passed their whole lives on the same spot, and life moved always in the same tranquil round. In truth, it is to such days that letter-writing, as a species of literature, belongs; telegrams and postal cards have almost killed it now.

The large collection of Cowper's letters is probably seldom taken from the shelf; and the "Elegant Extracts" select those letters which are most sententious, and therefore least characteristic. Two or three specimens of the other style may not be unwelcome or needless as elements of a biographical sketch; though specimens hardly do justice to a series of which the charm, such as it is, is evenly diffused, not gathered into centres of brilliancy like Madame de Sévigné's letter on the Orleans Marriage. Here is a letter written in the highest spirits to Lady Hesketh.

"Olney, Feb. 9th, 1786.

"My dearest Cousin,—I have been impatient to tell you that I am impatient to see you again. Mrs. Unwin partakes with me in all my feelings upon this subject, and longs also to see you. I should have told you so by the last post, but have been so completely occupied by this tormenting specimen, that it was impossible to do it. I sent the General a letter on Monday, that would distress

and alarm him; I sent him another yesterday, that will, I hope, quiet him again. Johnson has apologized very civilly for the multitude of his friend's strictures; and his friend has promised to confine himself in future to a comparison of me with the original, so that, I doubt not, we shall jog on merrily together. And now, my dear, let me tell you once more that your kindness in promising us a visit has charmed us both. I shall see you again. I shall hear your voice. We shall take walks together. I will show you my prospects—the hovel, the alcove, the Ouse and its banks, everything that I have described. I anticipate the pleasure of those days not very far distant, and feel a part of it at this moment. Talk not of an inn! Mention it not for your life! We have never had so many visitors but we could easily accommodate them all; though we have received Unwin, and his wife, and his sister, and his son all at once. My dear, I will not let you come till the end of May, or beginning of June, because before that time my greenhouse will not be ready to receive us, and it is the only pleasant room belonging to us. When the plants go out, we go in. I line it with mats, and spread the floor with mats; and there you shall sit with a bed of mignonette at your side, and a hedge of honeysuckles, roses, and jasmine; and I will make you a bouquet of myrtle every day. Sooner than the time I mention the country will not be in complete beauty.

"And I will tell you what you shall find at your first entrance. *Imprimis*, as soon as you have entered the vestibule, if you cast a look on either side of you, you shall see on the right hand a box of my making. It is the box in which have been lodged all my hares, and in which lodges Puss at present; but he, poor fellow, is worn out with age, and promises to die before you can see him.

On the right hand stands a cupboard, the work of the same author; it was once a dove-cage, but I transformed it. Opposite to you stands a table, which I also made; but a merciless servant having scrubbed it until it became paralytic, it serves no purpose now but of ornament; and all my clean shoes stand under it. On the left hand, at the further end of this superb vestibule, you will find the door of the parlour, into which I will conduct you, and where I will introduce you to Mrs. Unwin, unless we should meet her before, and where we will be as happy as the day is long. Order yourself, my cousin, to the Swan at Newport, and there you shall find me ready to conduct you to Olney.

"My dear, I have told Homer what you say about casks and urns, and have asked him whether he is sure that it is a cask in which Jupiter keeps his wine. He swears that it is a cask, and that it will never be anything better than a cask to eternity. So, if the god is content with it, we must even wonder at his taste, and be so too.

"Adieu! my dearest, dearest cousin. W. C."

Here, by way of contrast, is a letter written in the lowest spirits possible to Mr. Newton. It displays literary grace inalienable even in the depths of hypochondria. It also shows plainly the connexion of hypochondria with the weather. January was a month to the return of which the sufferer always looked forward with dread as a mysterious season of evil. It was a season, especially at Olney, of thick fog combined with bitter frosts. To Cowper this state of the atmosphere appeared the emblem of his mental state; we see in it the cause. At the close the letter slides from spiritual despair to the worsted-merchant, showing that, as we remarked before, the language of de-

spondency had become habitual, and does not always flow from a soul really in the depths of woe.

To the Rev. John Newton.

"Jan. 13th, 1784.

"My dear Friend,—I too have taken leave of the old year, and parted with it just when you did, but with very different sentiments and feelings upon the occasion. I looked back upon all the passages and occurrences of it, as a traveller looks back upon a wilderness through which he has passed with weariness and sorrow of heart, reaping no other fruit of his labour than the poor consolation that, dreary as the desert was, he has left it all behind him. The traveller would find even this comfort considerably lessened if, as soon as he had passed one wilderness, another of equal length, and equally desolate, should expect him. In this particular, his experience and mine would exactly tally. I should rejoice, indeed, that the old year is over and gone, if I had not every reason to prophesy a new one similar to it.

"The new year is already old in my account. I am not, indeed, sufficiently second-sighted to be able to boast by anticipation an acquaintance with the events of it yet unborn, but rest convinced that, be they what they may, not one of them comes a messenger of good to me. If even death itself should be of the number, he is no friend of mine. It is an alleviation of the woes even of an unenlightened man, that he can wish for death, and indulge a hope, at least, that in death he shall find deliverance. But, loaded as my life is with despair, I have no such comfort as would result from a supposed probability of better things to come, were it once ended. For, more unhappy than the traveller with whom I set out, pass through what

difficulties I may, through whatever dangers and afflictions, I am not a whit nearer the home, unless a dungeon may be called so. This is no very agreeable theme; but in so great a dearth of subjects to write upon, and especially impressed as I am at this moment with a sense of my own condition, I could choose no other. The weather is an exact emblem of my mind in its present state. A thick fog envelopes everything, and at the same time it freezes intensely. You will tell me that this cold gloom will be succeeded by a cheerful spring, and endeavour to encourage me to hope for a spiritual change resembling it;—but it will be lost labour. Nature revives again; but a soul once slain lives no more. The hedge that has been apparently dead, is not so; it will burst into leaf and blossom at the appointed time; but no such time is appointed for the stake that stands in it. It is as dead as it seems, and will prove itself no dissembler. The latter end of next month will complete a period of eleven years in which I have spoken no other language. It is a long time for a man, whose eyes were once opened, to spend in darkness; long enough to make despair an inveterate habit; and such it is in me. My friends, I know, expect that I shall see yet again. They think it necessary to the existence of divine truth, that he who once had possession of it should never finally lose it. I admit the solidity of this reasoning in every case but my own. And why not in my own? For causes which to them it appears madness to allege, but which rest upon my mind with a weight of immovable conviction. If I am recoverable, why am I thus?—why crippled and made useless in the Church, just at that time of life when, my judgment and experience being matured, I might be most useful?—why cashiered and turned out of service, till, according to the course of nature, there is not life

enough left in me to make amends for the years I have lost—till there is no reasonable hope left that the fruit can ever pay the expense of the fallow? I forestall the answer:—God's ways are mysterious, and He giveth no account of His matters—an answer that would serve my purpose as well as theirs to use it. There is a mystery in my destruction, and in time it shall be explained.

"I am glad you have found so much hidden treasure; and Mrs. Unwin desires me to tell you that you did her no more than justice in believing that she would rejoice in it. It is not easy to surmise the reason why the reverend doctor, your predecessor, concealed it. Being a subject of a free government, and I suppose full of the divinity most in fashion, he could not fear lest his riches should expose him to persecution. Nor can I suppose that he held it any disgrace for a dignitary of the Church to be wealthy, at a time when Churchmen in general spare no pains to become so. But the wisdom of some men has a droll sort of knavishness in it, much like that of a magpie, who hides what he finds with a deal of contrivance, merely for the pleasure of doing it.

"Mrs. Unwin is tolerably well. She wishes me to add that she shall be obliged to Mrs. Newton, if, when an opportunity offers, she will give the worsted-merchant a jog. We congratulate you that Eliza does not grow worse, which I know you expected would be the case in the course of the winter. Present our love to her. Remember us to Sally Johnson, and assure yourself that we remain as warmly as ever, Yours, W. C.

"M. U."

In the next specimen we shall see the faculty of imparting interest to the most trivial incident by the way of tell-

ing it. The incident in this case is one which also forms the subject of the little poem called *The Colubriad.*

To the Rev. William Unwin.

"Aug. 3rd, 1782.

"My dear Friend,—Entertaining some hope that Mr. Newton's next letter would furnish me with the means of satisfying your inquiry on the subject of Dr. Johnson's opinion, I have till now delayed my answer to your last; but the information is not yet come, Mr. Newton having intermitted a week more than usual since his last writing. When I receive it, favourable or not, it shall be communicated to you; but I am not very sanguine in my expectations from that quarter. Very learned and very critical heads are hard to please. He may, perhaps, treat me with levity for the sake of my subject and design, but the composition, I think, will hardly escape his censure. Though all doctors may not be of the same mind, there is one doctor at least, whom I have lately discovered, my professed admirer. He too, like Johnson, was with difficulty persuaded to read, having an aversion to all poetry except the *Night Thoughts;* which, on a certain occasion, when being confined on board a ship, he had no other employment, he got by heart. He was, however, prevailed upon, and read me several times over; so that if my volume had sailed with him, instead of Dr. Young's, I might, perhaps, have occupied that shelf in his memory which he then allotted to the Doctor; his name is Renny, and he lives at Newport Pagnel.

"It is a sort of paradox, but it is true: we are never more in danger than when we think ourselves most secure, nor in reality more secure than when we seem to be most

in danger. Both sides of this apparent contradiction were lately verified in my experience. Passing from the greenhouse to the barn, I saw three kittens (for we have so many in our retinue) looking with fixed attention at something, which lay on the threshold of a door, coiled up. I took but little notice of them at first; but a loud hiss engaged me to attend more closely, when behold—a viper! the largest I remember to have seen, rearing itself, darting its forked tongue, and ejaculating the aforementioned hiss at the nose of a kitten, almost in contact with his lips. I ran into the hall for a hoe with a long handle, with which I intended to assail him, and returning in a few seconds missed him: he was gone, and I feared had escaped me. Still, however, the kitten sat watching immovably upon the same spot. I concluded, therefore, that, sliding between the door and the threshold, he had found his way out of the garden into the yard. I went round immediately, and there found him in close conversation with the old cat, whose curiosity being excited by so novel an appearance, inclined her to pat his head repeatedly with her fore foot; with her claws, however, sheathed, and not in anger, but in the way of philosophical inquiry and examination. To prevent her falling a victim to so laudable an exercise of her talents, I interposed in a moment with the hoe, and performed an act of decapitation, which, though not immediately mortal, proved so in the end. Had he slid into the passages, where it is dark, or had he, when in the yard, met with no interruption from the cat, and secreted himself in any of the outhouses, it is hardly possible but that some of the family must have been bitten; he might have been trodden upon without being perceived, and have slipped away before the sufferer could have well distinguished what foe had wounded him.

Three years ago we discovered one in the same place, which the barber slew with a trowel.

"Our proposed removal to Mr. Small's was, as you suppose, a jest, or rather a joco-serious matter. We never looked upon it as entirely feasible, yet we saw in it something so like practicability, that we did not esteem it altogether unworthy of our attention. It was one of those projects which people of lively imaginations play with, and admire for a few days, and then break in pieces. Lady Austen returned on Thursday from London, where she spent the last fortnight, and whither she was called by an unexpected opportunity to dispose of the remainder of her lease. She has now, therefore, no longer any connexion with the great city; she has none on earth whom she calls friends but us, and no house but at Olney. Her abode is to be at the Vicarage, where she has hired as much room as she wants, which she will embellish with her own furniture, and which she will occupy, as soon as the minister's wife has produced another child, which is expected to make its entry in October.

"Mr. Bull, a dissenting minister of Newport, a learned, ingenious, good-natured, pious friend of ours, who sometimes visits us, and whom we visited last week, has put into my hands three volumes of French poetry, composed by Madame Guyon;—a quietist, say you, and a fanatic; I will have nothing to do with her. It is very well, you are welcome to have nothing to do with her, but in the meantime her verse is the only French verse I ever read that I found agreeable; there is a neatness in it equal to that which we applaud with so much reason in the compositions of Prior. I have translated several of them, and shall proceed in my translations till I have filled a Lilliputian paper-book I happen to have by me, which, when fill-

ed, I shall present to Mr. Bull. He is her passionate admirer, rode twenty miles to see her picture in the house of a stranger, which stranger politely insisted on his acceptance of it, and it now hangs over his parlour chimney. It is a striking portrait, too characteristic not to be a strong resemblance, and were it encompassed with a glory, instead of being dressed in a nun's hood, might pass for the face of an angel.

"Our meadows are covered with a winter-flood in August; the rushes with which our bottomless chairs were to have been bottomed, and much hay, which was not carried, are gone down the river on a voyage to Ely, and it is even uncertain whether they will ever return. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

"I am glad you have found a curate; may he answer! Am happy in Mrs. Bouverie's continued approbation; it is worth while to write for such a reader. Yours,

"W. C."

The power of imparting interest to commonplace incidents is so great that we read with a sort of excitement a minute account of the conversion of an old card-table into a writing and dining table, with the causes and consequences of that momentous event; curiosity having been first cunningly aroused by the suggestion that the clerical friend to whom the letter is addressed might, if the mystery were not explained, be haunted by it when he was getting into his pulpit, at which time, as he had told Cowper, perplexing questions were apt to come into his mind.

A man who lived by himself could have little but himself to write about. Yet in these letters there is hardly a touch of offensive egotism. Nor is there any querulousness, except that of religious despondency. From those

weaknesses Cowper was free. Of his proneness to self-revelation we have had a specimen already.

The minor antiquities of the generations immediately preceding ours are becoming rare, as compared with those of remote ages, because nobody thinks it worth while to preserve them. It is almost as easy to get a personal memento of Priam or Nimrod as it is to get a harpsichord, a spinning-wheel, a tinder-box, or a scratch-back. An Egyptian wig is attainable, a wig of the Georgian era is hardly so, much less a tie of the Regency. So it is with the scenes of common life a century or two ago. They are being lost, because they were familiar. Here are two of them, however, which have limned themselves with the distinctness of the camera-obscura on the page of a chronicler of trifles.

To the Rev. John Newton.

"Nov. 17th, 1783.

"My dear Friend, — The country around is much alarmed with apprehensions of fire. Two have happened since that of Olney. One at Hitchin, where the damage is said to amount to eleven thousand pounds; and another, at a place not far from Hitchin, of which I have not yet learnt the name. Letters have been dropped at Bedford, threatening to burn the town; and the inhabitants have been so intimidated as to have placed a guard in many parts of it, several nights past. Since our conflagration here, we have sent two women and a boy to the justice for depredation; S. R. for stealing a piece of beef, which, in her excuse, she said she intended to take care of. This lady, whom you well remember, escaped for want of evidence; not that evidence was wanting, but our men of Gotham judged it unnecessary to send it. With her went the

woman I mentioned before, who, it seems, has made some sort of profession, but upon this occasion allowed herself a latitude of conduct rather inconsistent with it, having filled her apron with wearing-apparel, which she likewise intended to take care of. She would have gone to the county gaol, had William Raban, the baker's son, who prosecuted, insisted upon it; but he, good-naturedly, though I think weakly, interposed in her favour, and begged her off. The young gentleman who accompanied these fair ones is the junior son of Molly Boswell. He had stolen some iron-work, the property of Griggs the butcher. Being convicted, he was ordered to be whipped, which operation he underwent at the cart's tail, from the stone-house to the high arch, and back again. He seemed to show great fortitude, but it was all an imposition upon the public. The beadle, who performed it, had filled his left hand with yellow ochre, through which, after every stroke, he drew the lash of his whip, leaving the appearance of a wound upon the skin, but in reality not hurting him at all. This being perceived by Mr. Constable H., who followed the beadle, he applied his cane, without any such management or precaution, to the shoulders of the too merciful executioner. The scene immediately became more interesting. The beadle could by no means be prevailed upon to strike hard, which provoked the constable to strike harder; and this double flogging continued, till a lass of Silver-End, pitying the pitiful beadle thus suffering under the hands of the pitiless constable, joined the procession, and placing herself immediately behind the latter, seized him by his capillary club, and pulling him backwards by the same, slapped his face with a most Amazon fury. This concatenation of events has taken up more of my paper than I intended it should, but I could not forbear to inform you

how the beadle thrashed the thief, the constable the beadle, and the lady the constable, and how the thief was the only person concerned who suffered nothing. Mr. Teedon has been here, and is gone again. He came to thank me for some left-off clothes. In answer to our inquiries after his health, he replied that he had a slow fever, which made him take all possible care not to inflame his blood. I admitted his prudence, but in his particular instance could not very clearly discern the need of it. Pump water will not heat him much; and, to speak a little in his own style, more inebriating fluids are to him, I fancy, not very attainable. He brought us news, the truth of which, however, I do not vouch for, that the town of Bedford was actually on fire yesterday, and the flames not extinguished when the bearer of the tidings left it.

"Swift observes, when he is giving his reasons why the preacher is elevated always above his hearers, that, let the crowd be as great as it will below, there is always room enough overhead. If the French philosophers can carry their art of flying to the perfection they desire, the observation may be reversed, the crowd will be overhead, and they will have most room who stay below. I can assure you, however, upon my own experience, that this way of travelling is very delightful. I dreamt a night or two since that I drove myself through the upper regions in a balloon and pair, with the greatest ease and security. Having finished the tour I intended, I made a short turn, and, with one flourish of my whip, descended; my horses prancing and curvetting with an infinite share of spirit, but without the least danger, either to me or my vehicle. The time, we may suppose, is at hand, and seems to be prognosticated by my dream, when these airy excursions will be universal, when judges will fly the circuit, and

bishops their visitations; and when the tour of Europe will be performed with much greater speed, and with equal advantage, by all who travel merely for the sake of having it to say that they have made it.

"I beg you will accept for yourself and yours our unfeigned love, and remember me affectionately to Mr. Bacon, when you see him. Yours, my dear friend,

"WM. COWPER."

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

"March 29th, 1784.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—It being his Majesty's pleasure that I should yet have another opportunity to write before he dissolves the Parliament, I avail myself of it with all possible alacrity. I thank you for your last, which was not the less welcome for coming, like an extraordinary gazette, at a time when it was not expected.

"As when the sea is uncommonly agitated, the water finds its way into creeks and holes of rocks, which in its calmer state it never reaches, in like manner the effect of these turbulent times is felt even at Orchard Side, where, in general, we live as undisturbed by the political element as shrimps or cockles that have been accidentally deposited in some hollow beyond the water-mark, by the usual dashing of the waves. We were sitting yesterday after dinner, the two ladies and myself, very composedly, and without the least apprehension of any such intrusion in our snug parlour, one lady knitting, the other netting, and the gentleman winding worsted, when to our unspeakable surprise a mob appeared before the window; a smart rap was heard at the door, the boys bellowed, and the maid announced Mr. Grenville. Puss was unfortunately let out of her box, so that the candidate, with all his good friends

at his heels, was refused admittance at the grand entry, and referred to the back door, as the only possible way of approach.

"Candidates are creatures not very susceptible of affronts, and would rather, I suppose, climb in at the window than be absolutely excluded. In a minute, the yard, the kitchen, and the parlour were filled. Mr. Grenville, advancing toward me, shook me by the hand with a degree of cordiality that was extremely seducing. As soon as he, and as many more as could find chairs, were seated, he began to open the intent of his visit. I told him I had no vote, for which he readily gave me credit. I assured him I had no influence, which he was not equally inclined to believe, and the less, no doubt, because Mr. Ashburner, the draper, addressing himself to me at this moment, informed me that I had a great deal. Supposing that I could not be possessed of such a treasure without knowing it, I ventured to confirm my first assertion by saying, that if I had any I was utterly at a loss to imagine where it could be, or wherein it consisted. Thus ended the conference. Mr. Grenville squeezed me by the hand again, kissed the ladies, and withdrew. He kissed, likewise, the maid in the kitchen, and seemed, upon the whole, a most loving, kissing, kind-hearted gentleman. He is very young, genteel, and handsome. He has a pair of very good eyes in his head, which not being sufficient as it should seem for the many nice and difficult purposes of a senator, he has a third also, which he suspended from his buttonhole. The boys halloo'd; the dogs barked; puss scampered; the hero, with his long train of obsequious followers, withdrew. We made ourselves very merry with the adventure, and in a short time settled into our former tranquillity, never probably to be thus interrupted more. I thought

myself, however, happy in being able to affirm truly that I had not that influence for which he sued; and which, had I been possessed of it, with my present views of the dispute between the Crown and the Commons, I must have refused him, for he is on the side of the former. It is comfortable to be of no consequence in a world where one cannot exercise any without disobliging somebody. The town, however, seems to be much at his service, and if he be equally successful throughout the country, he will undoubtedly gain his election. Mr. Ashburner, perhaps, was a little mortified, because it was evident that I owed the honour of this visit to his misrepresentation of my importance. But had he thought proper to assure Mr. Grenville that I had three heads, I should not, I suppose, have been bound to produce them.

"Mr. Scott, who you say was so much admired in your pulpit, would be equally admired in his own, at least by all capable judges, were he not so apt to be angry with his congregation. This hurt him, and had he the understanding and eloquence of Paul himself, would still hurt him. He seldom, hardly ever indeed, preaches a gentle, well-tempered sermon, but I hear it highly commended; but warmth of temper, indulged to a degree that may be called scolding, defeats the end of preaching. It is a misapplication of his powers, which it also cripples, and tears away his hearers. But he is a good man, and may perhaps outgrow it.

"Many thanks for the worsted, which is excellent. We are as well as a spring hardly less severe than the severest winter will give us leave to be. With our united love, we conclude ourselves yours and Mrs. Newton's affectionate and faithful,

W. C.

"M. U."

In 1789 the French Revolution, advancing with thunder-tread, makes even the hermit of Weston look up for a moment from his translation of Homer, though he little dreamed that he, with his gentle philanthropy and sentimentalism, had anything to do with the great overturn of the social and political systems of the past. From time to time some crash of especial magnitude awakens a faint echo in the letters.

To Lady Hesketh.

"July 7th, 1790.

"Instead of beginning with the saffron-vested mourning to which Homer invites me, on a morning that has no saffron vest to boast, I shall begin with you. It is irksome to us both to wait so long as we must for you, but we are willing to hope that by a longer stay you will make us amends for all this tedious procrastination.

"Mrs. Unwin has made known her whole case to Mr. Gregson, whose opinion of it has been very consolatory to me; he says, indeed, it is a case perfectly out of the reach of all physical aid, but at the same time not at all dangerous. Constant pain is a sad grievance, whatever part is affected, and she is hardly ever free from an aching head, as well as an uneasy side; but patience is an anodyne of God's own preparation, and of that He gives her largely.

"The French who, like all lively folks, are extreme in everything, are such in their zeal for freedom; and if it were possible to make so noble a cause ridiculous, their manner of promoting it could not fail to do so. Princes and peers reduced to plain gentlemanship, and gentles reduced to a level with their own lackeys, are excesses of which they will repent hereafter. Differences of rank and subordination are, I believe, of God's appointment, and

consequently essential to the well-being of society; but what we mean by fanaticism in religion is exactly that which animates their politics; and, unless time should sober them, they will, after all, be an unhappy people. Perhaps it deserves not much to be wondered at, that at their first escape from tyrannic shackles they should act extravagantly, and treat their kings as they have sometimes treated their idol. To these, however, they are reconciled in due time again, but their respect for monarchy is at an end. They want nothing now but a little English sobriety, and that they want extremely. I heartily wish them some wit in their anger, for it were great pity that so many millions should be miserable for want of it."

This, it will be admitted, is very moderate and unapocalyptic. Presently Monarchical Europe takes arms against the Revolution. But there are two political observers at least who see that Monarchical Europe is making a mistake — Kaunitz and Cowper. "The French," observes Cowper to Lady Hesketh in December, 1792, "are a vain and childish people, and conduct themselves on this grand occasion with a levity and extravagance nearly akin to madness; but it would have been better for Austria and Prussia to let them alone. All nations have a right to choose their own form of government, and the sovereignty of the people is a doctrine that evinces itself; for, whenever the people choose to be masters, they always are so, and none can hinder them. God grant that we may have no revolution here, but unless we have reform, we certainly shall. Depend upon it, my dear, the hour has come when power founded on patronage and corrupt majorities must govern this land no longer. Concessions, too, must be made to

Dissenters of every denomination. They have a right to them — a right to all the privileges of Englishmen, and sooner or later, by fair means or by foul, they will have them." Even in 1793, though he expresses, as he well might, a cordial abhorrence of the doings of the French, he calls them not fiends, but "madcaps." He expresses the strongest indignation against the Tory mob which sacked Priestley's house at Birmingham, as he does, in justice be it said, against all manifestations of fanaticism. We cannot help sometimes wishing, as we read these passages in the letters, that their calmness and reasonableness could have been communicated to another "Old Whig," who was setting the world on fire with his anti-revolutionary rhetoric.

It is true, as has already been said, that Cowper was "extramundane;" and that his political reasonableness was in part the result of the fancy that he and his fellow-saints had nothing to do with the world but to keep themselves clear of it, and let it go its own way to destruction. But it must also be admitted that while the wealth of Establishments of which Burke was the ardent defender, is necessarily reactionary in the highest degree, the tendency of religion itself, where it is genuine and sincere, must be to repress any selfish feeling about class or position, and to make men, in temporal matters, more willing to sacrifice the present to the future, especially where the hope is held out of moral as well as of material improvement. Thus it has come to pass that men who professed and imagined themselves to have no interest in this world have practically been its great reformers and improvers in the political and material as well as in the moral sphere.

The last specimen shall be one in the more sententious style, and one which proves that Cowper was capable of

writing in a judicious manner on a difficult and delicate question—even a question so difficult and so delicate as that of the propriety of painting the face.

To the Rev. William Unwin.

"May 3d, 1784.

"My dear Friend,—The subject of face painting may be considered, I think, in two points of view. First, there is room for dispute with respect to the consistency of the practice with good morals; and, secondly, whether it be, on the whole, convenient or not, may be a matter worthy of agitation. I set out with all the formality of logical disquisition, but do not promise to observe the same regularity any further than it may comport with my purpose of writing as fast as I can.

"As to the immorality of the custom, were I in France, I should see none. On the contrary, it seems in that country to be a symptom of modest consciousness, and a tacit confession of what all know to be true, that French faces have, in fact, neither red nor white of their own. This humble acknowledgment of a defect looks the more like a virtue, being found among a people not remarkable for humility. Again, before we can prove the practice to be immoral, we must prove immorality in the design of those who use it; either that they intend a deception, or to kindle unlawful desires in the beholders. But the French ladies, so far as their purpose comes in question, must be acquitted of both these charges. Nobody supposes their colour to be natural for a moment, any more than he would if it were blue or green; and this unambiguous judgment of the matter is owing to two causes: first, to the universal knowledge we have, that French women are naturally either brown or yellow, with very few

exceptions; and secondly, to the inartificial manner in which they paint; for they do not, as I am most satisfactorily informed, even attempt an imitation of nature, but besmear themselves hastily, and at a venture, anxious only to lay on enough. Where, therefore, there is no wanton intention, nor a wish to deceive, I can discover no immorality. But in England, I am afraid, our painted ladies are not clearly entitled to the same apology. They even imitate nature with such exactness that the whole public is sometimes divided into parties, who litigate with great warmth the question whether painted or not? This was remarkably the case with a Miss B——, whom I well remember. Her roses and lilies were never discovered to be spurious till she attained an age that made the supposition of their being natural impossible. This anxiety to be not merely red and white, which is all they aim at in France, but to be thought very beautiful, and much more beautiful than Nature has made them, is a symptom not very favourable to the idea we would wish to entertain of the chastity, purity, and modesty of our countrywomen. That they are guilty of a design to deceive, is certain. Otherwise why so much art? and if to deceive, wherefore and with what purpose? Certainly either to gratify vanity of the silliest kind, or, which is still more criminal, to decoy and inveigle, and carry on more successfully the business of temptation. Here, therefore, my opinion splits itself into two opposite sides upon the same question. I can suppose a French woman, though painted an inch deep, to be a virtuous, discreet, excellent character; and in no instance should I think the worse of one because she was painted. But an English belle must pardon me if I have not the same charity for her. She is at least an impostor, whether she cheats me or not, because she means

to do so; and it is well if that be all the censure she deserves.

"This brings me to my second class of ideas upon this topic; and here I feel that I should be fearfully puzzled were I called upon to recommend the practice on the score of convenience. If a husband chose that his wife should paint, perhaps it might be her duty, as well as her interest, to comply. But I think he would not much consult his own, for reasons that will follow. In the first place, she would admire herself the more; and in the next, if she managed the matter well, she might be more admired by others; an acquisition that might bring her virtue under trials, to which otherwise it might never have been exposed. In no other case, however, can I imagine the practice in this country to be either expedient or convenient. As a general one it certainly is not expedient, because, in general, English women have no occasion for it. A swarthy complexion is a rarity here; and the sex, especially since inoculation has been so much in use, have very little cause to complain that nature has not been kind to them in the article of complexion. They may hide and spoil a good one, but they cannot, at least they hardly can, give themselves a better. But even if they could, there is yet a tragedy in the sequel which should make them tremble.

"I understand that in France, though the use of rouge be general, the use of white paint is far from being so. In England, she that uses one commonly uses both. Now, all white paints, or lotions, or whatever they may be called, are mercurial; consequently poisonous, consequently ruinous, in time, to the constitution. The Miss B—— above mentioned was a miserable witness of this truth, it being certain that her flesh fell from her bones before she died.

Lady Coventry was hardly a less melancholy proof of it; and a London physician, perhaps, were he at liberty to blab, could publish a bill of female mortality, of a length that would astonish us.

"For these reasons I utterly condemn the practice, as it obtains in England; and for a reason superior to all these, I must disapprove it. I cannot, indeed, discover that Scripture forbids it in so many words. But that anxious solicitude about the person, which such an artifice evidently betrays, is, I am sure, contrary to the tenor and spirit of it throughout. Show me a woman with a painted face, and I will show you a woman whose heart is set on things of the earth, and not on things above.

"But this observation of mine applies to it only when it is an imitative art. For, in the use of French women, I think it is as innocent as in the use of a wild Indian, who draws a circle round her face, and makes two spots, perhaps blue, perhaps white, in the middle of it. Such are my thoughts upon the matter.

"*Vive valeque.*

"Yours ever,

"W. C."

These letters have been chosen as illustrations of Cowper's epistolary style, and for that purpose they have been given entire. But they are also the best pictures of his character; and his character is everything. The events of his life worthy of record might all be comprised in a dozen pages.

CHAPTER VIII.

CLOSE OF LIFE.

Cowper says there could not have been a happier trio on earth than Lady Hesketh, Mrs. Unwin, and himself. Nevertheless, after his removal to Weston, he again went mad, and once more attempted self-destruction. His malady was constitutional, and it settled down upon him as his years increased, and his strength failed. He was now sixty. The Olney physicians, instead of husbanding his vital power, had wasted it away *secundum artem* by purging, bleeding, and emetics. He had overworked himself on his fatal translation of Homer, under the burden of which he moved, as he says himself, like an ass overladen with sand-bags. He had been getting up to work at six, and not breakfasting till eleven. And now the life from which his had for so many years been fed, itself began to fail. Mrs. Unwin was stricken with paralysis; the stroke was slight, but of its nature there was no doubt. Her days of bodily life were numbered; of mental life there remained to her a still shorter span. Her excellent son, William Unwin, had died of a fever soon after the removal of the pair to Weston. He had been engaged in the work of his profession as a clergyman, and we do not hear of his being often at Olney. But he was in constant correspondence with Cowper, in whose heart as well as in that of Mrs. Unwin, his death must have left a great void,

and his support was withdrawn just at the moment when it was about to become most necessary.

Happily, just at this juncture a new and a good friend appeared. Hayley was a mediocre poet, who had for a time obtained distinction above his merits. Afterwards his star had declined, but having an excellent heart, he had not been in the least soured by the downfall of his reputation. He was addicted to a pompous rotundity of style; perhaps he was rather absurd; but he was thoroughly good-natured, very anxious to make himself useful, and devoted to Cowper, to whom, as a poet, he looked up with an admiration unalloyed by any other feeling. Both of them, as it happened, were engaged on Milton, and an attempt had been made to set them by the ears; but Hayley took advantage of it to introduce himself to Cowper with an effusion of the warmest esteem. He was at Weston when Mrs. Unwin was attacked with paralysis, and displayed his resource by trying to cure her with an electric-machine. At Eartham, on the coast of Sussex, he had, by an expenditure beyond his means, made for himself a little paradise, where it was his delight to gather a distinguished circle. To this place he gave the pair a pressing invitation, which was accepted in the vain hope that a change might do Mrs. Unwin good.

From Weston to Eartham was a three days' journey, an enterprise not undertaken without much trepidation and earnest prayer. It was safely accomplished, however, the enthusiastic Mr. Rose walking to meet his poet and philosopher on the way. Hayley had tried to get Thurlow to meet Cowper. A sojourn in a country house with the tremendous Thurlow, the only talker for whom Johnson condescended to prepare himself, would have been rather an overpowering pleasure; and perhaps, after all, it was as

well that Hayley could only get Cowper's disciple, Hurdis, afterwards professor of poetry at Oxford, and Charlotte Smith.

At Eartham, Cowper's portrait was painted by Romney.

"Romney, expert infallibly to trace
On chart or canvas not the form alone
And semblance, but, however faintly shown
The mind's impression too on every face,
With strokes that time ought never to erase,
Thou hast so pencilled mine that though I own
The subject worthless, I have never known
The artist shining with superior grace;
But this I mark, that symptoms none of woe
In thy incomparable work appear:
Well: I am satisfied it should be so,
Since on maturer thought the cause is clear;
For in my looks what sorrow could'st thou see
When I was Hayley's guest and sat to thee?"

Southey observes that it was likely enough there would be no melancholy in the portrait, but that Hayley and Romney fell into a singular error in mistaking for "the light of genius" what Leigh Hunt calls "a fire fiercer than that either of intellect or fancy, gleaming from the raised and protruded eye."

Hayley evidently did his utmost to make his guest happy. They spent the hours in literary chat, and compared notes about Milton. The first days were days of enjoyment. But soon the recluse began to long for his nook at Weston. Even the extensiveness of the view at Eartham made his mind ache, and increased his melancholy. To Weston the pair returned; the paralytic, of course, none the better for her journey. Her mind as well as her

body was now rapidly giving way. We quote as biography that which is too well known to be quoted as poetry.

TO MARY.

The twentieth year is well-nigh past
Since first our sky was overcast:—
Ah, would that this might be the last!
My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
I see thee daily weaker grow:—
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
My Mary!

Thy needles, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore,
Now rust disused, and shine no more,
My Mary!

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfil
The same kind office for me still,
Thy sight now seconds not thy will,
My Mary!

But well thou play'dst the housewife's part,
And all thy threads with magic art,
Have wound themselves about this heart,
My Mary!

Thy indistinct expressions seem
Like language utter'd in a dream:
Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
My Mary!

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary!

For could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see?
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,
Thy hands their little force resign;
Yet gently press'd, press gently mine,
My Mary!

Such feebleness of limbs thou provest,
That now at every step thou movest,
Upheld by two; yet still thou lovest,
My Mary!

And still to love, though press'd with ill,
In wintry age to feel no chill,
With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know,
How oft the sadness that I show
Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,
My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast
With much resemblance of the past,
Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary!

Even love, at least the power of manifesting love, began to betray its mortality. She who had been so devoted, became, as her mind failed, exacting, and instead of supporting her partner, drew him down. He sank again into the depth of hypochondria. As usual, his malady took the form of religious horrors, and he fancied that he was ordained to undergo severe penance for his sins. Six days he sat motionless and silent, almost refusing to take food.

His physician suggested, as the only chance of arousing him, that Mrs. Unwin should be induced, if possible, to invite him to go out with her; with difficulty she was made to understand what they wanted her to do; at last she said that it was a fine morning, and she should like a walk. Her partner at once rose and placed her arm in his. Almost unconsciously, she had rescued him from the evil spirit for the last time. The pair were in doleful plight. When their minds failed they had fallen in a miserable manner under the influence of a man named Teedon, a schoolmaster crazed with self-conceit, at whom Cowper in his saner mood had laughed, but whom he now treated as a spiritual oracle, and a sort of medium of communication with the spirit-world, writing down the nonsense which the charlatan talked. Mrs. Unwin, being no longer in a condition to control the expenditure, the housekeeping, of course, went wrong; and at the same time her partner lost the protection of the love-inspired tact by which she had always contrived to shield his weakness and to secure for him, in spite of his eccentricities, respectful treatment from his neighbours. Lady Hesketh's health had failed, and she had been obliged to go to Bath. Hayley now proved himself no mere lion-hunter, but a true friend. In conjunction with Cowper's relatives, he managed the removal of the pair from Weston to Mundsley, on the coast of Norfolk, where Cowper seemed to be soothed by the sound of the sea; then to Dunham Lodge, near Swaffham; and finally (in 1796) to East Dereham, where, two months after their arrival, Mrs. Unwin died. Her partner was barely conscious of his loss. On the morning of her death he asked the servant "whether there was life above stairs?" On being taken to see the corpse, he gazed at it for a moment, uttered one passionate cry of grief, and never spoke

of Mrs. Unwin more. He had the misfortune to survive her three years and a half, during which relatives and friends were kind, and Miss Perowne partly filled the place of Mrs. Unwin. Now and then there was a gleam of reason and faint revival of literary faculty; but composition was confined to Latin verse or translation, with one memorable and almost awful exception. The last original poem written by Cowper was *The Castaway*, founded on an incident in Anson's Voyage.

"Obscurest night involved the sky,
The Atlantic billows roared,
When such a destined wretch as I,
Wash'd headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home forever left.

"No braver chief could Albion boast
Than he with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast
With warmer wishes sent.
He loved them both, but both in vain;
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

"Not long beneath the whelming brine,
Expert to swim, he lay;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
Or courage die away;
But waged with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

"He shouted; nor his friends had fail'd
To check the vessel's course,
But so the furious blast prevail'd
That pitiless perforce
They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

"Some succour yet they could afford;
And, such as storms allow,
The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
Delay'd not to bestow:
But he, they knew, nor ship nor shore,
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

"Nor, cruel as it seem'd, could he
Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight in such a sea
Alone could rescue them;
Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

"He long survives, who lives an hour
In ocean, self-upheld;
And so long he, with unspent power,
His destiny repelled:
And ever, as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cried—'Adieu!'

"At length, his transient respite past,
His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in every blast,
Could catch the sound no more:
For then, by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

"No poet wept him; but the page
Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
Is wet with Anson's tear:
And tears by bards or heroes shed
Alike immortalize the dead.

"I therefore purpose not, or dream,
Descanting on his fate,

To give the melancholy theme
A more enduring date:
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case.

"No voice divine the storm allay'd,
No light propitious shone,
When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,
We perish'd, each alone:
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelm'd in deeper gulfs than he."

The despair which finds vent in verse is hardly despair. Poetry can never be the direct expression of emotion; it must be the product of reflection combined with an exercise of the faculty of composition which in itself is pleasant. Still, *The Castaway* ought to be an antidote to religious depression, since it is the work of a man of whom it would be absurdity to think as really estranged from the spirit of good, who had himself done good to the utmost of his powers.

Cowper died very peacefully on the morning of April 25, 1800, and was buried in Dereham Church, where there is a monument to him with an inscription by Hayley, which, if it is not good poetry, is a tribute of sincere affection.

Any one whose lot it is to write upon the life and works of Cowper must feel that there is an immense difference between the interest which attaches to him, and that which attaches to any one among the far greater poets of the succeeding age. Still, there is something about him so attractive, his voice has such a silver tone, he retains, even in his ashes, such a faculty of winning friends, that his biographer and critic may be easily be-

guiled into giving him too high a place. He belongs to a particular religious movement, with the vitality of which the interest of a great part of his works has departed or is departing. Still more emphatically and in a still more important sense does he belong to Christianity. In no natural struggle for existence would he have been the survivor; by no natural process of selection would he ever have been picked out as a vessel of honour. If the shield which for eighteen centuries Christ, by His teaching and His death, has spread over the weak things of this world, should fail, and might should again become the title to existence and the measure of worth, Cowper will be cast aside as a specimen of despicable infirmity, and all who have said anything in his praise will be treated with the same scorn.

THE END.

LANDOR

BY

SIDNEY COLVIN

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE standard and indispensable authority on the life of Landor is the work of the late Mr. John Forster, viz.:

1. FORSTER, John: Walter Savage Landor, a Biography, London, Chapman and Hall; first edition in 2 vols., 1869; second edition, abridged, forming vol. i. of the collected "Life and Works of Walter Savage Landor" in 8 vols., 1876.

Mr. Forster was appointed by Landor himself as his literary executor; he had command of all the necessary materials for his task, and his book is written with knowledge, industry, affection, and loyalty of purpose. But it is cumbrous in comment, inconclusive in criticism, and vague on vital points, especially on points of bibliography, which in the case of Landor are frequently both interesting and obscure. The student of Landor must supplement the work of Mr. Forster from other sources, of which the principal are the following:

2. HUNT, J. E. Leigh, Lord Byron and his Contemporaries. London, 1827.
3. BLESSINGTON, Marguerite, Countess of, The Idler in Italy, 2 vols. London, 1839. Lady Blessington's first impressions of Landor are reported in vol. ii. of the above; her correspondence with him, and an Imaginary Conversation by Landor not elsewhere reprinted, will be found in
4. MADDEN, R. R., The Literary Life and Correspondence of the Countess of Blessington, 3 vols. London, 1855.
5. The New Spirit of the Age, edited by R. H. Horne. 2 vols. London, 1844. The article on Landor in vol. i. of the above is by Miss Barrett, afterwards Mrs. Browning, supplemented by the editor.
6. EMERSON, R. W., English Traits. London, 1856.

7. Field, Kate, Last Days of Walter Savage Landor, a series of three articles in the Atlantic Monthly Magazine for 1866.
8. Robinson, H. Crabbe, Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence of, edited by Thomas Sadler, 3 vols. London, 1869.
9. Dickens, Charles: A short article on Forster's "Biography" in All the Year Round for 1869, supplementing with some striking physiognomic touches the picture of Landor drawn by the same hand in "Bleak House" (see below, p. 178).
10. Linton, Mrs. E. Lynn: Reminiscences of Walter Savage Landor, in Fraser's Magazine for July, 1870; by far the best account of the period of Landor's life to which it refers.
11. Houghton, Lord: Monographs. London, 1873.

I forbear to enumerate the various articles on Landor and his works which I have consulted in reviews and magazines between the dates 1798 and 1870; several of the most important are mentioned in the text. In addition to the materials which exist in print, I have had the advantage of access to some unpublished. To Mr. Robert Browning in particular my thanks are due for his great kindness in allowing me to make use of the collection of books and manuscripts left him by Landor, including Landor's own annotated copies of some of his rarest writings, and a considerable body of his occasional jottings and correspondence. Mr. Augustus J. C. Hare was also good enough to put into my hands a number of letters written by Landor to his father and to himself. To Lord Houghton I am indebted for help of various kinds, and to Mr. Swinburne for his most friendly pains in looking through the sheets of my work, and for many valuable suggestions and corrections.

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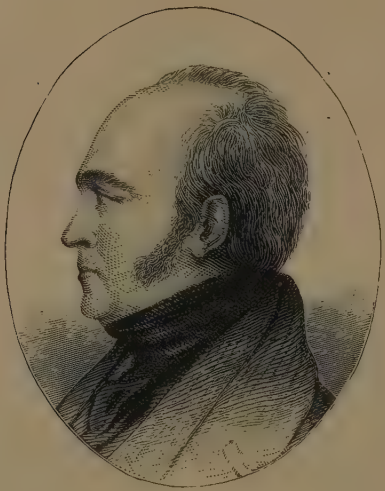
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LANDOR.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE—SCHOOL—COLLEGE.

[1775—1794.]

Few men have ever impressed their peers so much, or the general public so little, as Walter Savage Landor. Of all celebrated authors, he has hitherto been one of the least popular. Nevertheless he is among the most striking figures in the history of English literature; striking alike by his character and his powers. Personally, Landor exercised the spell of genius upon every one who came near him. His gifts, attainments, impetuosities, his originality, his force, his charm, were all of the same conspicuous and imposing kind. Not to know what is to be known of so remarkable a man is evidently to be a loser. Not to be familiar with the works of so noble a writer is to be much more of a loser still.

The place occupied by Landor among English men of letters is a place apart. He wrote on many subjects and in many forms, and was strong both in imagination and in criticism. He was equally master of Latin and English, and equally at home in prose and verse. He cannot prop-

erly be associated with any given school, or, indeed, with any given epoch, of our literature, as epochs are usually counted, but stands alone, alike by the character of his mind and by the tenour and circumstances of his life. It is not easy to realize that a veteran who survived to receive the homage of Mr. Swinburne can have been twenty-five years old at the death of Cowper, and forty-nine at the death of Byron. Such, however, was the case of Landor. It is less than seventeen years since he died, and less than eighteen since he published his last book; his first book had been published before Buonaparte was consul. His literary activity extended, to be precise, over a period of sixty-eight years (1795—1863). Neither was his career more remarkable for its duration than for its proud and consistent independence. It was Landor's strength as well as his weakness that he was all his life a law to himself, writing in conformity with no standards and in pursuit of no ideals but his own.

So strong, indeed, was this instinct of originality in Landor that he declines to fall in with the thoughts or to repeat the words of others even when to do so would be most natural. Though an insatiable and retentive reader, in his own writing he does not choose to deal in the friendly and commodious currency of quotation, allusion, and reminiscence. Everything he says must be his own, and nothing but his own. On the other hand, it is no part of Landor's originality to provoke attention, as many even of illustrious writers have done, by emphasis or singularity of style. Arbitrary and vehement beyond other men in many of his thoughts, in their utterance he is always sober and decorous. He delivers himself of whatever is in his mind with an air, to borrow an expression of his own, "majestically sedate." Again, although in saying

what he chooses to say, Landor is one of the clearest and most direct of writers, it is his pleasure to leave much unsaid of that which makes ordinary writing easy and effective. He is so anxious to avoid saying what is superfluous that he does not always say what is necessary. As soon as he has given adequate expression to any idea, he leaves it and passes on to the next, forgetting sometimes to make clear to the reader the connexion of his ideas with one another.

These qualities of unbending originality, of lofty self-control, and of deliberate parsimony in utterance, are evidently not the qualities to carry the world by storm. Neither did Landor expect to carry the world by storm. He wrote less for the sake of pleasing others than himself. He addressed a scanty audience while he lived, but looked forward with confidence to one that should be more numerous in the future, although not very numerous even then. "I shall dine late; but the dining-room will be well-lighted, the guests few and select." In the meantime Landor contented himself with the applause he had, and considering whence that applause came, he had, indeed, good reason to be content. His early poem of *Gebir* was the delight first of Southey and afterwards of Shelley, who at college used to declaim it with an enthusiasm which disconcerted his friends, and which years did not diminish. The admiration of Southey for Landor's poetry led the way to an ardent and lasting friendship between the two men. By Wordsworth Landor was regarded less warmly than by Southey, yet with a respect which he extended to scarcely any other writer of his time. Hazlitt, who loved Wordsworth little and Southey less, and on whose dearest predilections Landor unsparingly trampled, nevertheless acknowledged the force of his genius.

Charles Lamb was at one time as great a reader and quoter of *Gebir* as Shelley himself, and at another could not dismiss from his mind or lips the simple cadences of one of Landor's elegies. De Quincey declared that his Count Julian was a creation worthy to take rank beside the Prometheus of Æschylus, or Milton's Satan. As the successive volumes of his *Imaginary Conversations* appeared, they seemed to some of the best minds of the time to contain masterpieces almost unprecedented not only of English composition, but of insight, imagery, and reflection. The society of their author was sought and cherished by the most distinguished of his countrymen. The members of the scholar family of Hare, and those of the warrior family of Napier, were among his warmest admirers and closest friends. Coming down to a generation of which the survivors are still with us, Dickens, Carlyle, Emerson, Lord Houghton, Robert and Elizabeth Browning have been among those who have delighted to honour him; and the list might be brought down so as to include names of all degrees of authority and standing. While the multitude has ignored Landor, he has been for three generations teaching and charming those who in their turn have taught and charmed the multitude.

By his birthplace, as he loved to remember, Landor was a neighbour of the greatest English poets. He was born at Warwick on the 30th of January, 1775. He was proud of his lineage, and fond of collecting evidences of its antiquity. His family had, in fact, been long one of property and position in Staffordshire. He believed that it had originally borne the name of Del-a La'nd or De la Laundes, and that its descent could be traced back for seven hundred years; for about half that time, said his less credulous or less imaginative brother. What is cer

tain is that some of the Staffordshire Landors had made themselves heard of in the wars of King and Parliament. A whig Landor had been high sheriff of the county at the Revolution of 1688; his grandson, on the other hand, was a marked man for his leanings towards the house of Stuart. A son of this Jacobite Landor being head of the family in the latter part of the last century, was at the same time engaged in the practice of medicine at Warwick. This Dr. Landor was Walter Savage Landor's father.

Of Dr. Landor the accounts which have reached us are not sufficient to convey any very definite image. His memory survives only as that of a polished, sociable, agreeable, somewhat choleric gentleman, more accomplished and better educated, as his profession required, than most of those with whom he associated, but otherwise dining, coursing, telling his story and drinking his bottle without particular distinction among the rest. *Lepidus, doctus, liberalis, probus, amicis jucundissimus*—these are the titles selected for his epitaph by his sons Walter and Robert, both of them men exact in weighing words. Dr. Landor was twice married, first to a Miss Wright of Warwick, and after her death to Elizabeth Savage, of the Warwickshire family of the Savages of Tachbrook. By his first wife he had six children, all of whom, however, died in infancy except one daughter. By his second wife he had three sons and four daughters; and of this second family Walter Savage Landor was the eldest born. Both the first and the second wives of Dr. Landor were heiresses in their degree. The fortune of the first devolved by settlement upon her surviving daughter, who was in due time married to a cousin, Humphrey Arden of Longcroft. The family of the second, that of the Savages of Tachbrook, was of better cer-

tified antiquity and distinction than his own, though the proofs by which Walter Savage Landor used to associate with it certain historical personages bearing the same name were of a somewhat shadowy nature. The father of Elizabeth Savage had been lineally the head of his house; but the paternal inheritance which she divided with her three sisters was not considerable—the family estates having passed, it seems, into the hands of two of her grand-uncles, men of business in London. By these there was bequeathed to her, after her marriage with Dr. Landor, property to the value of nearly eighty thousand pounds, consisting of the two estates of Ipsley Court and Tachbrook in Warwickshire, the former on the borders of Worcestershire, the latter close to Leamington, together with a share of the reversionary interest in a third estate — that of Hughenden Manor in Buckinghamshire — of which the name has since become familiar to us from other associations. The Warwickshire properties thus left to Mrs. Landor, as well as Dr. Landor's own family property in Staffordshire, were strictly entailed upon the eldest male issue of the marriage; so that to these united possessions Walter Savage Landor was born heir.

No one, it should seem, ever entered life under happier conditions. To the gifts of breeding and of fortune there were added at his birth the gifts of genius and of strength. But there had been evil godmothers beside the cradle as well as good, and in the composition of this powerful nature pride, anger, and precipitancy had been too largely mixed, to the prejudice of a noble intellect and tender heart, and to the disturbance of all his relations with his fellow-men. Of his childhood no minute record has come down to us. It seems to have been marked by neither the precocities nor the infirmities of genius. Indeed, al-

though in after-life Landor used often to complain of ailments, of serious infirmities he knew little all his days. His mother, whose love for her children was solicitous and prudent rather than passionate or very tender, only once had occasion for anxiety as to the health of her eldest born. This was when he was seized, in his twelfth year, with a violent attack, not of any childish malady, but of gout; an attack which the boy endured, it is said, with clamorous resentment and impatience; and which never afterwards returned.

He had been sent as a child of only four-and-a-half to a school at Knowle, ten miles from home. Here he stayed five years or more, until he was old enough to go to Rugby. His holidays were spent between his father's professional abode in the town of Warwick and one or other of the two country houses on the Savage estates—Ipsley Court and Tachbrook. To these homes of his boyhood Landor was accustomed all his life to look back with the most affectionate remembrance. He had a retentive memory for places, and a great love of trees and flowers. The mulberries, cedars, and fig-trees of the Warwick garden, the nut-walk and apricots of Tachbrook, afforded him joys which he never afterwards forgot. Of Warwick he writes, in his seventy-eighth year, that he has just picked up from the gravel walk the two first mulberries that have fallen, a thing he remembers having done just seventy years before; and of Tachbrook, in his seventy-seventh, "Well do I remember it from my third or fourth year; and the red filbert at the top of the garden, and the apricots from the barn wall, and Aunt Nancy cracking the stones for me. If I should ever eat apricots with you again, I shall not now cry for the kernel." For Ipsley and its encircling stream the pleasantest expression of Landor's affection is

contained in some unpublished verses, which may find their place here, although they refer to a later period of his youth:

"I hope in vain to see again
Ipsley's peninsular domain.
In youth 'twas there I used to scare
A whirring bird or scampering hare,
And leave my book within a nook
Where alders lean above the brook,
To walk beyond the third mill-pond,
And meet a maiden, fair and fond,
Expecting me beneath a tree
Of shade for two but not for three.
Ah! my old yew, far out of view,
Why must I bid you both adieu?"

This love of trees, flowers, and places, went along in the boy with a love of books. He was proficient in school exercises, all except arithmetic, an art which, "according to the method in use," he never succeeded in mastering. At Rugby, where he went at ten, he was soon among the best Latin scholars; and he has recorded his delight over the first purchase of English books he made with his own money; the books in question being Drayton's *Polyolbion* and Baker's *Chronicle*. He tells elsewhere how the writer who first awoke in him the love of poetry was Cowper. He seems from the first to have been a greedy reader, even to the injury of his power of sleep. "I do not remember," he writes among his unpublished jottings, "that I ever slept five hours consecutively, rarely four, even in boyhood. I was much of a reader of night, and was once flogged for sleeping at the evening lesson, which I had learnt, but having mastered it, I dozed."

This bookish boy was at the same time physically strong and active, though not particularly dexterous. Dancing,

to his own great chagrin, he could never learn, and on horseback his head was too full of thoughts to allow him much to mind his riding. At boxing, cricket, and football he could hold his own well. But the sport he loved was fishing with a cast-net; at this he was really skilful, and apt in the pursuit to break bounds and get into trouble. One day he was reported for having flung his net over, and victoriously held captive, a farmer who tried to interfere with his pastime; another day, for having extorted a nominal permission to fish where he had no sort of business from a passing butcher, who had no sort of authority to give it. A fag, whose unlucky star he had chosen all one afternoon to regard as the cause of his bad sport, remembered all his life Landor's sudden change of demeanour, and his own poignant relief, when the taking of a big fish convinced him that the said star was not unlucky after all. Like many imaginative boys to whose summer musings the pools and shallows of English lowland streams have seemed as full of romance as Eurotas or Scamander, he loved nothing so well as to wander by the brook-side, sometimes with a sporting, but sometimes also with a studious intent. He recalls these pleasures in a retrospective poem of his later years, *On Swift joining Avon near Rugby:*

"In youth how often at thy side I wander'd;
What golden hours, hours numberless, were squander'd
Among thy sedges, while sometimes
I meditated native rhymes,
And sometimes stumbled upon Latian feet;
There, where soft mole-built seat
Invited me, I noted down
What must full surely win the crown;
But first impatiently vain efforts made
On broken pencil with a broken blade."

Again, one of the most happily turned of all Landor's Latin poems expresses his regret that his eldest son, born in Italy, will never learn to know and love the English streams which had been the delight of his own youth. And once more, he records how the subject of that most perfect of dramatic dialogues, *Leofric and Godiva*, had first occupied him as a boy. He had written a little poem on the subject as he sat by the square pool at Rugby—"May the peppermint still be growing on the bank in that place!"—and he remembers the immoderate laughter with which his attempt was received by the friend to whom he confided it, and his own earnestness in beseeching that friend not to tell the lads—"so heart-strickenly and desperately was I ashamed."

Landor, it thus appears, had acquired in his earliest school days the power and the habit, which remained with him until almost the hour of his death, of writing verses for his own pleasure both in Latin and English. As regards Latin, he is the one known instance in which the traditional classical education of our schools took full effect, and was carried out to its furthest practical consequences. Not only did Latin become in boyhood and remain to the last a second mother tongue to him; his ideal of behaviour at the same time modelled itself on the ancient Roman, and that not alone in things convenient. Not content with taking Cato or Scipio or Brutus for his examples, when he was offended he instinctively betook himself to the weapons of Catullus and Martial. Now a schoolboy's alcaics and hendecasyllabics may be never so well turned, but if their substance is both coarse and savage, and if moreover they are directed against that schoolboy's master, the result can hardly be to his advantage. And thus it fell out with Landor. He might easily have

been the pride of the school, for whatever were his faults of temper, his brilliant scholarship could not fail to recommend him to his teachers, nor his ready kindness towards the weak, his high spirit and sense of honour to his companions. He was pugnacious, but only against the strong. "You remember," he writes, in some verses addressed seventy years later to an old school companion—

> "You remember that I fought
> Never with any but an older lad,
> And never lost but two fights in thirteen."

Neither would it much have stood in Landor's way that his lofty ideas of what was due to himself made him refuse, at school as afterwards, to compete against others for prizes or distinctions of any kind. What did stand in his way was his hot and resentful impatience alike of contradiction and of authority. Each half-holiday of the school was by a customary fiction supposed to be given as a reward for the copy of verses declared to be the best of the day, and, with or without reason, Landor conceived that the head master — Dr. James — had systematically grudged this recognition to verses of his. When at last play-day was given for a copy of Landor's, the boy added in transcribing it a rude postscript, to the effect that it was the worst he had ever written. In other controversies that from time to time occurred between master and scholar, there were not wanting kindlier and more humorous passages than this. But at last there arose a quarrel over a Latin quantity, in which Landor was quite right at the outset, but by his impracticable violence put himself hopelessly in the wrong—complicating matters not only with fierce retorts, but with such verses as made authority's very hair stand on end. This was in his sixteenth year,

when he was within five of being head of the school. The upshot was that the head master wrote to Dr. Landor, with many expressions of regret, requesting that his son Walter might be removed, lest he should find himself under the necessity of expelling him as one not only rebellious himself, but a promoter of rebellion in others.

Signs of the same defiant spirit had not been wanting in his home life. The seeds seem to have been already sown of an estrangement, never afterwards altogether healed, between himself and his father. In politics Dr. Landor had been originally a zealous Whig; but he was one of those Whigs for whom the French Revolution was too much. During that crisis he was swept along the stream of alarm and indignation which found both voice and nourishment in the furious eloquence of Burke; and when the party at last broke in two he went with those who deserted Fox and became the fervent followers of Pitt. The boyish politics of young Landor were of a very different stamp. He was already, what he remained to the end of his days, an ardent republican and foe to kings. The French Revolution had little to do with making or unmaking his sentiments on these points. His earliest admiration was for Washington, his earliest and fiercest aversion for George III. And he had no idea of keeping his opinions to himself, but would insist on broaching them, no matter what the place or company. The young rebel one day cried out in his mother's room that he wished the French would invade England, and assist us in hanging George the Third between two such rascals as the Archbishops of Canterbury and York; whereupon that excellent lady was seen to rise, box his ears from behind his chair, and then hastily make off upon her high-heeled shoes for fear of consequences. Again, we hear of his flinging

an impetuous taunt across the table at a bishop who was dining with his father, and who had spoken slightingly of the scholarship of Porson. Nevertheless it must not be supposed that Landor, even in the rawest and most combative days of his youth, was at any time merely ill-conditioned in his behaviour. He was never without friends in whom the signs both of power and tenderness which broke through his unruly ways inspired the warmest interest and affection. Such friends included at this time the most promising of his schoolmates, more than one charming girl companion of his own family or their acquaintances, and several seniors of various orders and conditions. His principal school friends were Henry Cary, afterwards translator of Dante, and Walter Birch, an accomplished scholar who became an Oxford tutor, and ended his days at a country living in Essex. Girls of his own age or older found something attractive in the proud and stubborn boy, who for all his awkwardness and headlong temper was chivalrous to them, could turn the prettiest verses, and no doubt even in speech showed already some rudiments of that genius for the art of compliment which distinguished him beyond all men in later life. Thus we find him towards his twentieth year in the habit of receiving from Dorothea Lyttelton, the beautiful orphan heiress of estates contiguous to his home, advice conveyed in terms betokening the closest intimacy and kindness. Among his elders he attached to himself as friends characters so opposite as "the elegant and generous Dr. Sleath," one of his Rugby masters, with whom he was never on any but the kindest terms: Mr. Parkhurst of Ripple, a country squire, and father of one of his schoolmates; and the famous Dr. Parr, at that time and for many years perpetual curate of Hatton, near Warwick.

This singular personage, in spite of many grotesque pomp-positions of speech, and some of character, commanded respect alike by his learning and his love of liberty. He was a pillar of advanced Whig opinions, and a friend of most of the chief men of that party. To the study where Parr lived ensconced with his legendary wig and pipe, and whence, in the lisping utterance that suited so quaintly with his sesquipedalian vocabulary, he fulminated against Pitt and laid down the law on Latin from amid piles of books and clouds of tobacco-smoke, the young Landor was wont to resort in search of company more congenial than that of the orthodox clergy and lawyers who frequented his father's house.

In speaking of these friendships of Landor's youth we have somewhat anticipated the order of events. To return to the date of his removal from Rugby: he was next placed under the charge of a Dr. Langley, at the village, celebrated for the charms of its scenery, of Ashbourne, in Derbyshire. Here again he showed how strong an attachment he was capable of inspiring in, and returning towards, a gentle and friendly senior. In his dialogue of Izaak Walton, Cotton, and Oldways, Dr. Langley is immortalized in the character of the "good parson of Ashbourne;" "he wants nothing, yet he keeps the grammar school, and is ready to receive as private tutor any young gentleman in preparation for Oxford or Cambridge, but only one. They live like princes, converse like friends, and part like lovers." In a note to the same dialogue, as well as several times elsewhere, Landor explicitly declares his gratitude for the "parental kindness" of Dr. Langley and his wife, as also that which he bore all his life to two others of his teachers, the above mentioned Dr. Sleath at Rugby, and "the saintly Benwell" at Oxford.

In this kind household Landor passed nearly two years. In Latin it appears that he had not much to learn from the good vicar, but he turned his time to account in reading the Greek writers, especially Sophocles and Pindar; in translating some of Buchanan into English, and some of Cowley into Latin verse, besides other poetical efforts in both languages. His English verses at this time show him not yet emancipated from the established precedents of the eighteenth century. It is not until a year or two later that we find him abandoning, in narrative poetry, the trim monotony of the rhyming couplet for a blank verse of more massive structure and statelier march than any which had been written since Milton.

At eighteen Landor left Ashbourne and went into residence at Trinity College, Oxford. His abilities made their impression at the university in spite of himself; but he still would not be persuaded to compete for any sort of distinction. "I showed my compositions to Birch of Magdalen, my old friend at Rugby, and to Cary, translator of Dante, and to none else." Landor's reputation for talents which he would not put forth was accompanied by a reputation for opinions which he would not conceal. The agitation of political parties was at its height. The latter course of the Revolution had alienated the majority even of those who had sympathized with it at first, and the few Englishmen who did not share the general horror were marked men. Among those few there were at Oxford in these days two undergraduates, Southey of Balliol, and Landor of Trinity. The two were not known to each other until afterwards; but they both made themselves conspicuous by appearing in hall and elsewhere with their hair unpowdered, a fashion which about 1793—1794 was a direct advertisement of revolutionary sentiments. "Take

care," said Landor's tutor to him; "they will stone you for a republican." No such consequences in fact resulted, but Landor became notorious in the university. He was known not only as a Jacobin, but as a "mad Jacobin." "His Jacobinism," says Southey, looking back to his own feelings in those days, "would have made me seek his acquaintance, but for his madness." The impression thus left on Southey's mind was probably due less to the warmth of Landor's revolutionary sentiments and language, than to the notoriety of the freak which, before long, brought him for the second time into violent and futile collision with authority. One evening he invited his friends to wine. He had been out shooting in the morning, and had his gun, powder, and shot in the next room. Opposite were the rooms of a Tory undergraduate, "a man," according to Landor's account, "universally laughed at and despised; and it unfortunately happened that he had a party on the same day, consisting of servitors and other raffs of every description." The two parties began exchanging taunts; then those opposite closed the shutters, and being on the outside, Landor proposed, by way of a practical joke, to send a charge of shot into them. His friends applauded, and he fired. The owner of the shutters naturally complained, and an inquiry was instituted to ascertain who was the offender. Landor's defiant mood at this point played him an ill turn, in that it prompted him, instead of frankly stating the facts, to refuse all information. Part of his motive in this course, as he himself afterwards explained, was his unwillingness to add to the causes of displeasure which he was conscious of having already given to his father. He could not have followed a more injudicious course. The president was compelled to push the inquiry and to inflict punishment. This he

seems to have done as leniently and considerately as possible; and when sentence of rustication was pronounced, it was with the expressed hope, on the part of all the college authorities but one, that its victim would soon return to do them honour. Strangely enough, it seems also to have been hoped that a return to his home would bring about a better understanding between young Landor and his father. But so far from this being the case, his bearing after the freak, more even than the freak itself, together with his subsequent step of giving up his college rooms, exasperated Dr. Landor; passionate words were exchanged; and the son turned his back on his father's house, as he declared and believed, "for ever."

CHAPTER II.

EXPERIMENTS IN LIFE AND POETRY—GEBIR.

[1794—1804.]

From Warwick Landor went at first to London, where he took a lodging in Beaumont Street, Portland Place. Here he worked hard for several months at French and Italian, having formed the design of leaving England and taking up his abode in Italy. His Italian studies made him an ardent admirer of Alfieri, whom he always afterwards counted it an event to have met once at this time in a bookseller's shop. During these months he also brought out his first book, "The Poems of Walter Savage Landor; printed for T. Cadell, jun. and W. Davies (successors to John Cadell) in the Strand, 1795." This small volume is now very rare, having been, like several of Landor's writings, withdrawn from sale by its author within a few weeks of publication. It contained a number of poems and epigrams in English, besides a collection of Latin verses and a prose *Defensio* vindicating the use of that language by the moderns. The principal English pieces are a poem in three cantos on the *Birth of Poesy*, an *Apology for Satire*, a tale of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, imitated from Ovid, an *Epistle* of Abélard to Eloisa, all in the rhymed heroic couplet, an ode *To Washington* in the style of Gray, and a short poem in the metre since made

popular by *In Memoriam*, called *French Villagers*. Landor already shows indications of a manner more vigorous and personal than that of the current poetry of the day, but in diction as well as in the choice of metrical forms he is still under the rule of eighteenth century conventions, and writes of nymphs and swains, Bellona and the Zephyrs. At Oxford, where the rumour of his talents and the notoriety of his escapade were still fresh, his little volume seems to have made an impression, and to have been in demand as long as it remained in circulation. Another literary venture made by Landor during these months in London did not, like the last, bear his name. This was a satire against Pitt, in the form of a *Moral Epistle* in heroic verse, addressed to Earl Stanhope, with a prose preface in which the republican poet condoles with the republican peer on his possession of hereditary honours.

While the young Landor was thus engaged with poetry and politics in London, the good offices of friends, and foremost among them of the fair Dorothea Lyttelton and her uncles, had been employed in seeking to reconcile him with his family. Several propositions as to his future mode of life were successively made and dropped—one being that he should be offered a commission then vacant in the Warwickshire Militia. This scheme, however, never came to Landor's knowledge, having fallen to the ground when it was ascertained that the other gentlemen of the corps would resign rather than serve with a comrade of his opinions. The arrangement ultimately made was that he should receive an allowance of a hundred and fifty pounds a year, and be free to live as he liked, it being understood that the idea of a retreat to Italy was given up, and that he was welcome to free quarters at his father's

house whenever he pleased. If this allowance seems small, it must be remembered that Dr. Landor's family property in Staffordshire was worth something under a thousand pounds a year; while there were six younger children for whom Mrs. Landor, her estates being strictly entailed upon her eldest son, held herself bound to make provision out of her income during her life. To her careful and impartial justice towards all her children there exists abundant testimony, including that of Walter himself, whose feelings towards his mother were at all times those of unclouded gratitude and affection.

Matters having been thus arranged, Landor left London, and, with the exception of occasional visits to his family, led during the next three years a life of seclusion in South Wales. He took up his residence on the coast, of which the natural charms were not then defiled as they are now by the agglomerations and exhalations of the mining and smelting industries. Having his headquarters generally at Swansea, sometimes at Tenby, and sometimes taking excursions into remoter parts of the Principality, he filled the chief part of his time with strenuous reading and meditation. His reminiscences of the occupations of these days are preserved in sundry passages both of prose and rhyme. Thus, contrasting the tenour of his own youth with that of Moore's—

> "Alone I spent my earlier hour,
> While thou wert in the roseate bower,
> And raised to thee was every eye,
> And every song won every sigh.
> One servant and one chest of books
> Follow'd me into mountain nooks,
> Where, shelter'd from the sun and breeze,
> Lay Pindar and Thucydides."

Among all the ancient and modern writers whom Landor read and pondered at this time, those who had most share in forming his mind seem to have been Pindar and Milton. What he admired, he says, in Pindar, was his "proud complacency and scornful strength. If I could resemble him in nothing else, I was resolved to be as compendious and as exclusive." But the strongest spell was that laid upon him by Milton, for whom, alike as a poet, hero, and republican seer and prophet, he now first conceived the enthusiastic reverence which afterwards inspired some of his noblest writing. "My prejudices in favour of ancient literature began to wear away on reading *Paradise Lost*, and even the great hexameter sounded to me tinkling when I had recited aloud, in my solitary walks on the sea-shore, the haughty appeal of Satan and the repentance of Eve." Here, from a letter written long after to Lady Blessington, is another retrospective glimpse of his life in those days. "I lived," he writes, "chiefly among woods, which are now killed with copper works, and took my walks over sandy sea-coast deserts, then covered with low roses and thousands of nameless flowers and plants, trodden by the naked feet of the Welsh peasantry, and trackless. These creatures were somewhat between me and the animals, and were as useful to the landscape as masses of weed or stranded boats." Never were his spirits better, he writes in the same connexion, although he did not exchange twelve sentences with men.

It is clear that Landor here exaggerates in some degree the loneliness of his life. If he did not exchange twelve sentences with men, he at all events found occasion for more extended parley with the other sex. He was, in fact, by no means as much a stranger to the roseate bower as the verses above quoted might lead us to suppose. These

days of solitary rambles and high communings, "Studies intense of strong and stern delight"—the line is his own. —were also to Landor days of romance. The earliest heroine of his devotions during his life in Wales was called in the language of poetry Ionè, and in that of daily life Jones. To her succeeded, but without, it would seem, altogether supplanting her, a second and far more serious flame. This was a blithe Irish lady, who conceived a devoted passion for the haughty and studious youth, and whom her poet called Ianthè. Ianthè stands for Jane, and the full name of the lady was Sophia Jane Swift—afterwards Countess de Molandé. I find the history of these names Ionè and Ianthè, which fill so considerable a place in Landor's early poetry, set down as follows in one of those autobiographical jottings in verse which he did not think it worth while to publish, but which are characteristic as illustrating his energetic and deliberate way of turning trifles into verse:

"Sometimes, as boys will do, I play'd at love,
Nor fear'd cold weather, nor withdrew in hot;
And two who were my playmates at that hour,
Hearing me call'd a poet, in some doubt
Challenged me to adapt their names to song.
Ionè was the first; her name is heard
Among the hills of Cambria, north and south,
But there of shorter stature, like herself;
I placed a comely vowel at its close,
And drove an ugly sibilant away.
* * * * *
Ianthè, who came later, smiled and said,
I have two names and will be praised in both;
Sophia is not quite enough for me,
And you have simply named it, and but once.
Now call the other up—
* * * * *

I went, and planted in a fresh parterre
Ianthè; it was blooming, when a youth
Leapt o'er the hedge, and snatching at the stem
Broke off the label from my favourite flower,
And stuck it on a sorrier of his own."

The sally in the last lines is curious. Both Shelley and Byron have made English readers familiar with the name Ianthè. So far as I can learn, it had not appeared in English poetry at all until it was introduced by Landor, except in Dryden's translation of the story of Iphis and Ianthè from Ovid. It was in 1813 that both Byron chose it as a fancy name for Lady Ann Harley, in the dedication of Childe Harold, and Shelley as a real name to be given to his infant daughter. The "youth" of the above extract can hardly be any other than Byron, whom Landor neither liked nor much admired, and whom he considered, as we thus perceive, to have borrowed this beautiful name Ianthè from his own early poetry.

Upon the whole, the life led by Landor at twenty, and for the years next following, was one well suited to the training of a poet. He nourished his mind resolutely upon the noblest sustenance, making his own all that was best in the literatures of ancient and modern Europe—except, indeed, in the literature of Germany, which had been then barely discovered in England by a few explorers like Scott, Coleridge, and William Taylor of Norwich, and to which Landor neither now nor afterwards felt himself attracted. He haunted, moreover, with the keenest enjoyment of its scenery, a region hardly less romantic or less impressive than that which was inspiring at the same time the youth of Wordsworth. If he was inclined to trifle with the most serious of things, love, that is a fault by which the quality of a man's life suffers, but not neces-

sarily the quality of his song; and experiences both more transient and more reckless than his have made of a Burns or a Heine the exponents of the passion for all generations.

Landor, however, was not destined to be one of the master poets either of nature, like Wordsworth, or of passion, like Burns or Heine. All his life he gave proof, in poetry, of remarkable and versatile capacity, but of no overmastering vocation. So little sure, indeed, in youth was he of his own vocation, that his first important poem, *Gebir*, was suggested by an accident and prefaced with an apology. The history of *Gebir* is this: Landor had made friends at Tenby with the family of Lord Aylmer, and one of the young ladies of that family, his especial and close friend Rose Aylmer, lent him a history of romance by one Clara Reeve. At the end of this book he found a sketch of a tale, nominally Arabian, which struck his imagination as having in it something of a shadowy, antique grandeur—*magnificum quid sub crepusculo antiquitatis*, as he afterwards defined the quality—and out of which he presently constructed the following story: Gebir (whence Gibraltar), a prince of Spain, in fulfilment of a vow binding him to avenge hereditary wrongs, makes war against Charoba, a young queen of Egypt. Charoba seeks counsel of her nurse, the sorceress Dalica, who devises succour through her magic arts. An interview next takes place between Charoba and the invader, when their enmity changes into mutual love. Gebir hereupon directs his army to restore and colonize a ruined city which had been founded in the country of Charoba by one of his ancestors; and the work is begun and carried on until it is suddenly undone by magic. Meanwhile the brother of Gebir, Tamar, a shepherd-prince, whose task it is to tend the

flocks of the invading host, has in his turn fallen in love with an ocean nymph, who had encountered and beaten him in wrestling. Gebir persuades Tamar to let *him* try a fall with the nymph, and throwing her, learns from her, first promising that she shall have the hand of Tamar for her reward, the rites to be performed in order that his city may rise unimpeded. In the fulfilment of these rites Gebir visits the under-world, and beholds the shades of his ancestors. After his return it is agreed that he shall be wedded to Charoba. Tamar also and his nymph are to be united; their marriage takes place first, and the nymph, warning her husband of calamities about to befall in Egypt, persuades him to depart with her, and after leading him in review past all the shores of the Mediterranean, unfolds to him a vision of the glory awaiting his descendants in the lands between the Rhine and the Garonne. Then follows the marriage of Gebir and Charoba, which they and their respective hosts intend to be the seal of a great reconciliation. But, inasmuch as "women communicate their fears more willingly than their love," Charoba has never avowed her change of heart to Dalica, who believes the marriage to be only a stratagem devised by the queen to get Gebir within her power. Accordingly she gives the bridegroom, to put on during the ceremony, a poisoned garment which she has obtained from her sister, a sorceress stronger than herself. The poison takes effect, and the poem ends with the death of Gebir in the arms of the despairing Charoba, and in view of the assembled hosts.

Such is the plot, shadowy in truth and somewhat chaotic, of Landor's first considerable poem. In his preface he declares the work to be "the fruit of Idleness and Ignorance; for had I been a botanist or a mineralogist, it

had never been written." We ought, however, to qualify these careless words of the preface, by remembering those of the poem itself, in which he invokes the spirit of Shakspeare, and tells how—

> "——— panting in the play-hour of my youth,
> I drank of Avon, too, a dangerous draught
> That roused within the feverish thirst of song."

Having determined to write *Gebir*, Landor hesitated for some time whether to do so in Latin or in English, and had even composed some portions in the former language before he finally decided in favour of the latter. And then, when he had written his first draft of the poem in English, he lost the manuscript, and only recovered it after a considerable time. Here is his account of the matter as he recollected it in old age:

> "Sixty the years since Fidler bore
> My grouse-bag up the Bala moor;
> Above the lakes, along the lea,
> Where gleams the darkly yellow Dee;
> Through crags, o'er cliffs, I carried there
> My verses with paternal care,
> But left them, and went home again
> To wing the birds upon the plain.
> With heavier luggage half forgot,
> For many months they follow'd not.
> When over Tawey's sands they came,
> Brighter flew up my winter flame,
> And each old cricket sang alert
> With joy that they had come unhurt."

When he had recovered the manuscript of his poem, Landor next proceeded to condense it. He cuts out, he tells us, nearly half of what he had written. The poem as so abridged is, for its length, probably the most "compendious and exclusive" which exists. The narrative is

packed into a space where it has no room to develope itself at ease. The transitions from one theme to another are effected with more than Pindaric abruptness, and the difficulty of the poem is further increased by the occurrence of grammatical constructions borrowed from the Latin, and scarcely intelligible to those ignorant of that language. It is only after considerable study that the reader succeeds in taking in *Gebir* as a whole, however much he may from the first be impressed by the power of particular passages. Next to the abruptness and the condensation of *Gebir*, its most striking qualities are breadth and vividness of imagination. Taken severally, and without regard to their sequence and connexion, these colossal figures and supernatural actions are presented with masterly reality and force. As regards style and language, Landor shows that he has not been studying the great masters in vain. He has discarded Bellona and the Zephyrs, and calls things by their proper names, admitting no heightening of language that is not the natural expression of heightened thought. For loftiness of thought and language together, there are passages in *Gebir* that will bear comparison with Milton. There are lines too that for majesty of rhythm will bear the same comparison; but majestic as Landor's blank verse often is, it is always too regular; it exhibits none of the Miltonic variety, none of the inventions in violation or suspension of ordinary metrical law, by which that great master draws unexampled tones from his instrument.

Here, indeed, was a contrast to the fashionable poetry of the hour, to the dulcet inanities of Hayley and of Miss Seward. *Gebir* appeared just at the mid-point of time between the complaint of Blake concerning the truancy of the Muses from England,

> "The languid strings do scarcely move,
> The sound is forced, the notes are few,"

and the thanksgiving of Keats,

> "——— fine sounds are floating wild
> About the earth."

Of the fine sounds that heralded to modern ears the revival of English poetry, *Gebir* will always remain for students one of the most distinctive. The *Lyrical Ballads*, the joint venture of Coleridge and Wordsworth, which appeared in the same year as *Gebir*, began with the *Ancient Mariner*, a work of even more vivid and haunting, if also more unearthly, imagery, and ended with the *Lines written on revisiting Tintern Abbey*, which conveyed the first notes of a far deeper spiritual message. But nowhere in the works of Wordsworth or Coleridge do we find anything resembling Landor's peculiar qualities of haughty splendour and massive concentration. The message, such as it is, of *Gebir* is mainly political and philanthropic. The tragic end of the hero and his bride is designed to point a moral against the enterprises of hatred and ambition, the happy fates of Tamar and the nymph to illustrate the reward that awaits the peaceful. The progeny whom the latter pair see in a vision celebrating the triumphs of liberty are intended to symbolize the people of revolutionary France. The passage describing their festivity, cancelled in subsequent editions, is one of the best in the original poem, and its concluding image may serve to illustrate both the style and the versification of *Gebir* at least as well as other passages more commonly quoted, like the shell, the meeting of the prince and Charoba, or the bath of Charoba.

"What hoary form so vigorous vast bends here?
Time, Time himself throws off his motley garb,
Figured with monstrous men and monstrous gods,
And in pure vesture enters their pure fanes,
A proud partaker of their festivals.
Captivity led captive, war o'erthrown,
They shall o'er Europe, shall o'er earth extend
Empire that seas alone and skies confine,
And glory that shall strike the crystal stars."

In the same spirit Buonaparte is included among the descendants of Tamar, and his birth foreshadowed as that of

"A mortal man above all mortal praise."

On the other hand George III. is introduced, with a lordly neglect of the considerations of time and space, among the ancestors of Gebir suffering the penalty of their crimes in the nether regions. "Aroar," cries the prince to his guide—

"Aroar, what wretch that nearest us? What wretch
Is that with eyebrows white, and slanting brow?"

(In conversation, it may be mentioned, Landor had another formula for expressing his aversion for the physical appearance of his sovereign. He had only seen him once, and "his eyes," he was accustomed to say—"his eyes looked as if they had been cut out of a vulture's gizzard.") In taking leave of *Gebir*, let us only note farther the personal allusions which it contains in two passages to Landor's relations with his Ionè. One is a direct apostrophe in which he celebrates her beauties; her cheeks, her temples, her lips, her eyes, her throat, which he calls love's column

"Marmoreal, trophied round with golden hair."

In the other passage she is introduced among the choir of nymphs attendant upon the bride of Tamar:

> "Scarce the sweet-flowing music he imbibes,
> Or sees the peopled Ocean; scarce he sees
> Spio with sparkling eyes, or Beroè
> Demure, and young Ionè, less renown'd,
> Not less divine, mild-natured, Beauty form'd
> Her face, her heart Fidelity; for gods
> Design'd a mortal, too, Ionè loved."

Landor was at all times sensible enough of the difference between his own marble and other men's stucco; and he expected great things of *Gebir*. At the same time, he published it in the manner least likely to ensure success, that is anonymously, and in pamphlet shape, through a local publisher at Warwick. Considering the reception given twenty years afterwards to the poetry of Keats and Shelley, it is no wonder that *Gebir* was neglected. The poem found, indeed, one admirer, and that was Southey, who read it with enthusiasm, recommended it in speech and writing to his friends, Cobbe, William Taylor, Grosvenor Bedford, the Hebers, and in the year following its publication (1799) called public attention to it in the pages of the *Critical Review*. Another distinguished admirer, of some years later date, was De Quincey, who was accustomed to profess—although Landor scouted the profession—that he also had for some time "conceited himself" to be the sole purchaser and appreciater of *Gebir*. Southey's praise in the *Critical Review* was soon balanced by a disparaging article in the *Monthly*, in which the anonymous author was charged, among other things, with having too closely imitated Milton. To this Landor prepared a reply, written, to judge by the specimens given in Forster's *Life*, in just the same solid, masculine, clenching

style with which we are familiar in his later prose, but withheld from publication in deference to the judicious advice of a friend.

Whether the scant success of his poem really had anything to do with the restlessness of Landor's life and the desultoriness of his efforts during the next few years, we can hardly tell. He says himself, in his lofty way, that if even foolish men had cared for *Gebir*, he should have continued to apply himself to poetry, since "there is something of summer in the hum of insects." As it was he allowed himself to drift. He began to diversify his exile with frequent and prolonged visits to Bath, London, Brighton. He tried his powers fitfully in many directions. Dr. Parr was eager to enlist his young friend in the ranks of Whig journalism, and persuaded him to place himself in relations with Robert Adair, the right-hand man in these matters of Charles James Fox; under whose guidance Landor became for a while a frequenter of the reporter's gallery, a contributor to the *Courier*, and a butt for the attacks of the *Anti-Jacobin*. In scorn and denunciation of "the Execrable"—that is to say, of Pitt and of his policy—Landor could be trusted not to fail; but in support of Fox and his, it was unsafe to count upon him too far. He was not, indeed, of the stuff of which practically effective political writers are made. While he despised party watchwords and party men, his temperament was not dispassionate enough for wise neutrality. His political writings, as we shall see, testify to a staunch and high devotion to the great principles of freedom and of justice, as well as to a just observation of many of the broad facts of politics and society. But in dealing with individual problems and persons Landor knows no measure, and is capable neither of allowance nor abatement. In his eyes all champions of

liberty are for the time being spotless heroes; nearly all kings, tyrants to be removed by the dagger or the rope; and, with a few shining exceptions, most practical politicians knaves and fools.

How long Landor's connexion with the *Courier* lasted does not appear; but it was, at any rate, not terminated till the resignation of Pitt, and the formation of the Addington Ministry in 1801. This event exasperated the Whig party, and especially Parr, whose correspondence with Landor at this time consists of pompous and elaborate diatribes, the substance of which he entreats his young friend to recast for publication in the party sheet. Then ensued the peace of Lunéville; and in the next year, 1802, the peace of Amiens. Landor, like all the world, took the opportunity to visit Paris; but, like himself, declined to accept introductions or to pay any kind of personal homage to the victorious Consul or to his ministers. His, at least, was not one among the feeble heads, to slavery prone, upon which Wordsworth poured scorn on the same occasion. Landor travelled alone, made his own observations on the people and the country; witnessed, from the illuminated garden of the Tuileries, the young conqueror's reception by the multitude when he appeared at the window of the palace, and contrived, in the great review afterwards, to get a place within a few feet of him as he rode by. Of all this Landor wrote fully and unaffectedly at the time in letters, which have been preserved, to his sisters and brothers. Here, written ten years afterwards, and coloured by a certain measure of deliberate and, in truth, somewhat over-magniloquent rhetoric, is his account of the reflexions to which another incident of his Paris trip gave rise; I mean his visit to the spoils of art there collected in the Louvre from the churches and galleries of Italy and of all

Europe. "I went," he says, "with impatient haste to behold these wonders of their age and of all ages succeeding, but no sooner had I ascended a few steps leading to them than I leaned back involuntarily against the balusters, and my mind was overshadowed and almost overpowered by these reflections: has then the stupidity of men who could not, in the whole course of their existence, have given birth to anything equal to the smallest of the works above, been the cause of their removal from the country of those who produced them? Kings, whose fatuity would have befitted them better to drive a herd of swine than to direct the energies of a nation! Well, well! I will lose for a moment the memory of their works in contemplating those of greater men."

The events of the last five years had had no more effect than those of the five preceding them in modifying the essential points of Landor's political creed. The portents of the Directory and Consulate had no more been able than the orgies of the Terror to disgust him with republicanism or to reconcile him to monarchy. He had shared, indeed, the chagrin and reprobation with which all friends of liberty looked on the subversion by revolutionary France, now that she was transformed into a conquering power, of ancient liberties outside her borders. But it was France only, and not the Revolution, that Landor held guilty. He had by this time conceived for that country and its inhabitants an aversion in which he never afterwards wavered. "A scoundrel of a Frenchman—tautology *quantum* scoundrel — did so and so," he wrote once to Hare, and the words convey his sentiments on the subject in a nutshell. The French are for him henceforward the most ferocious, the most inconstant, the most ungovernable of human beings. "As to the cause of liberty," he

writes from Paris to his brother in 1802, "this cursed nation has ruined it for ever." The fault in his eyes is not nearly so much that of their new master as their own. Buonaparte is indeed no longer for Landor the mortal man above all mortal praise of *Gebir*, any more than the French people are the peaceful progeny of Tamar; but he is the best ruler for such a race. "Doubtless the government of Buonaparte is the best that can be contrived for Frenchmen. Monkeys must be chained, though it may cost them some grimaces." And again, reiterating the same idea more gravely ten years afterwards, Landor writes: "No people is so incapable of governing itself as the French, and no government is so proper for it as a despotic and a military one. A nation more restless and rapacious than any horde in Tartary can be controlled only by a Ghenghiz Khan. . . . Their emperor has acted towards them with perfect wisdom, and will leave to some future Machiavelli, if Europe should again see so consummate a politician, a name which may be added to Agathocles and Cæsar Borgia. He has amused himself with a display of every character from Masaniello up to Charlemagne, but in all his pranks and vagaries he has kept one foot upon Frenchmen."

This whimsical energy of dislike extends from the political to the private characteristics of the French; to their looks, their voices and manners, and even to the scenery and climate of their country. "Of all the coasts," it is declared in one of his dialogues—"of all the coasts in the universe, of the same extent, those of France for nearly their totality in three seas are the least beautiful and the least interesting." "The children, the dogs, the frogs, are more clamorous than ours; the cocks are shriller." The language of the French, as a language, Landor also thinks

deplorable; but he is too good a judge of letters to extend his contempt to their writings. He was solidly and familiarly versed in the great French writers from Montaigne and Rabelais down, and though he did scant justice to Voltaire, and saw the weakness rather than the strength of the French poetical drama, he thought many of their prose writers second only, if second at all, to the best of antiquity. The style of Rousseau in particular he thought incomparable. He held also in high admiration the great French oratorical divines, and felt and valued to the full the combined pregnancy and simplicity of thought and utterance which distinguish those two pre-eminent classics in verse and prose respectively, La Fontaine and Pascal. "Do we find in Pascal anything of the lying, gasconading, vapouring Frenchmen? On the contrary, we find, in despite of the most miserable language, all the sober and retired graces of style, all the confident ease of manliness and strength, with an honest but not abrupt simplicity which appeals to the reason, but is also admitted to the heart."

To return to the history of Landor's occupations, in 1800 he had published, in the shape of an unbound quarto pamphlet of fourteen pages, a collection of short "Poems from the Arabic and Persian," written in irregular, unrhymed verses, principally anapæstic. An autograph note added in old age to his own copy says, "I wrote these poems after reading what had been translated from the Arabic and Persian by Sir W. Jones and Dr. Nott." In his preface Landor professes to have followed a French version of the originals, but neither such version nor such originals are known to exist; and it may be safely inferred that both the statement of the preface and the elaborate notes appended to each poem are so much mystifica-

tion. The pamphlet is of extreme rarity, and its contents were not reprinted until 1858. I give, by way of example, the following characteristic and taking little piece with which it concludes:

> "Oh Rahdi, where is happiness?
> Look from your arcade, the sun rises from Busrah;
> Go thither, it rises from Ispahan.
> Alas! it rises neither from Ispahan nor Busrah,
> But from an ocean impenetrable to the diver.
> Oh, Rahdi, the sun is happiness."

To which Landor adds a note to say that "this poem resembles not those ridiculous quibbles which the English in particular call epigrams, but rather, abating some little for *Orientalism*, those exquisite *Eidyllia*, those carvings as it were on ivory or on gems, which are modestly called epigrams by the Greeks."

This little publication, as was natural from its shape and character, attracted no attention, nor did Landor attempt anything in the same manner afterwards. Two years later, immediately before his expedition to Paris in 1802, he put forth another small volume under the title of "Poetry, by the author of Gebir." This contains two short narrative poems in blank verse—*Chrysaor* and the *Phocæans*, besides a few miscellaneous lyrics in Latin and English. Landor's mind was still occupied with the mythic past of Bætic Spain; and *Chrysaor* is an episode of the war between Gods and Titans, in which Gades (Cadiz) is severed from the mainland by Neptune at the request of Jove. Both in subject and in treatment it seems to foreshadow the *Hyperion* of Keats, except that the manner of the elder poet is more massive, more concentrated, and proportionately less lucid than that of the

younger. To my mind *Chrysaor* is Landor's finest piece of narrative writing in blank verse; less monotonous in its movement than *Gebir*, more lofty and impassioned than any of the later "Hellenics" with which it was afterwards incorporated. At the time of its publication this poem made a deep impression upon Wordsworth.[1] The *Phocæans*, on the other hand, which tells of the foundation of the colony of Massilia by emigrants of that race—a subject which had been in Landor's mind since Oxford days—is so fragmentary and so obscure as to baffle the most tenacious student. It contains, like all Landor's early poetry, images both condensed and vivid, as well as weighty reflections weightily expressed; but in its sequence and incidents the poem is, to me at least, unintelligible. So at the time it seems to have been found by Southey, who hastened to review this new publication by the unknown object of his previous enthusiasm, but could find little to say in its praise.

Another task which occupied Landor at this time was the re-editing of *Gebir*, in conjunction with his brother Robert, then at Oxford. In order to make the poem more popular, the brothers reprinted it with arguments and notes; some of the latter being intended to clear up difficulties, others to modify points concerning which, as for instance, the character of Buonaparte, the author had changed his mind. At the same time they published separately a Latin translation, which, together with a scholarly and vigorous preface in the same language, Walter had prepared expressly at Robert's instigation by way of helping the piece into

[1] In the final collected edition of Landor's writings (1876) *Chrysaor* is inadvertently printed as part of the same poem with *Regeneration*, which was written twenty years later, and with which it has nothing at all to do.

popularity. These, it must be remembered, were the days of Vincent Bourne, Bobus Smith, Frere, Canning, and Wellesley, when the art of Latin versification was studied, practised, and enjoyed not in scholastic circles alone, but by a select public of the most distinguished Englishmen; so that there was not quite so much either of pedantry or of simplicity in the fraternal enterprise as appeared at first sight.

At the end of the volume of "Poetry" published in 1802 there had already appeared one or two lyrics referring, though not yet under that name, to the lady whom Landor afterwards called Ianthè. More were appended, and this time with the name, to yet another experimental scrap of a volume in verse, having for its chief feature a tale in eight-syllable rhyme called *Gunlaug and Helga*, suggested by Herbert's translation from the Icelandic. This appeared in 1804 or 1805, while Robert Landor was still at Oxford, and by him, if by no one else, was dutifully reviewed in a periodical of his own creation, the *Oxford Review*. From these years, about 1802—1806, dates the chief part of Landor's verses written to or about Ianthè. Whether in the form of praise, of complaint, or of appeal, these verses are for the most part general in their terms, and do not enable us definitely to retrace the course of an attachment on which Landor never ceased to look back as the strongest of his life, and for the object of which he continued until her death to entertain the most chivalrous and tender friendship. Landor's verses in this class, although not in the first rank of love-poetry, nevertheless express much contained passion in their grave, concise way, and seldom fail to include, within the polished shell of verse, a solid and appropriate kernel, however minute, of thought. Here, in a somewhat depressed and ominous key, is a good example of the style:

"I held her hand, the pledge of bliss,
Her hand that trembled and withdrew,
She bent her head before my kiss—
My heart was sure that hers was true.

"Now I have told her I must part,
She shakes my hand, she bids adieu,
Nor shuns the kiss—alas, my heart!
Hers never was the heart for you."

In other pieces we get a more outspoken tale of past delights and of the pain of present separation. The lady went abroad, and the restlessness of Landor's life increased. He moved frequently between Wales, Bath, Clifton, Warwick, Oxford, and London. We find him in close correspondence, generally on subjects of literature or scholarship, with his friends Cary and Birch. Another of his intimate friends of the years just preceding these had been Rough, a young lawyer married to a daughter of Wilkes, and then of a shining promise which smouldered off later into disappointment and mediocrity. With him Landor on slight occasion or none had about this time one of his impulsive, irreconcilable quarrels. In the meantime his father's health was gradually and painfully breaking up. It was evident that Walter would soon come into possession of the patrimonial portion of his inheritance. He did not wait that event to outrun his allowance. We find him buying a horse one day, a Titian another, a Hogarth on the third; and generally beginning to assume the habits of a gentleman of property and taste. He was full at the same time of lofty schemes, literary and other. The expedition of the fleet under Nelson called forth some verses of which we cannot but regret the loss, and in which the writer seemed, to quote the friend to whom he addressed them,

"to have been inspired by the prophetic spirit ascribed to the poets of old, and to have anticipated the glorious victory of Nelson, the news of which had reached me just before I received them." The victory in question was the battle of Trafalgar, and between the date of this letter, November 11, 1805, and Christmas of the same year, Dr. Landor had died, and Walter had come into possession of his patrimony.

CHAPTER III.

MORE EXPERIMENTS AND MARRIAGE — BATH — SPAIN — LLANTHONY—COUNT JULIAN.

[1805—1814.]

As soon as he was his own master, Landor proceeded to enlarge his style of living in proportion to his increased means, or rather beyond such proportion as it turned out. He continued to make Bath his headquarters, and, externally at least, lived there for some time the life of any other young (although, indeed, he was not now so very young) Fortunio. His political opinions were a source of some scandal, and it was remarked that any other man talking as Landor talked would have been called to account for it over and over again. Once or twice, indeed, it seems as if collisions had only been averted by the good offices of friends; but there was something about Landor which did not encourage challenge; partly, no doubt, his obvious intrepidity, and partly, we may infer, his habitual exactness on the point of personal courtesy even in the midst of his most startling sallies. Perhaps, too, republicanism seemed to lose something of its odiousness in a gentleman of Landor's known standing and fortune. Common report exaggerated at this time his wealth and his expectations, and his own prodigality in the matter of horses, carriages, servants, plate, pictures, and the like, lent coun-

tenance to the exaggeration. In his personal habits, it must at the same time be noted, Landor was now, as always, frugal. He drank water, or only the lightest wines, and ate fastidiously indeed, but sparely. All his life he would touch no viands but such as were both choice and choicely dressed, and he preferred to eat them alone, or in the company of one or two, regarding crowded repasts as fit only for savages. "To dine in company with more than two is a Gaulish and a German thing. I can hardly bring myself to believe that I have eaten in concert with twenty; so barbarous and herdlike a practice does it now appear to me, such an incentive to drink much and talk loosely—not to add, such a necessity to speak loud—which is clownish and odious in the extreme." The speaker in the above passage is Lucullus, but the sentiments are Landor's own. Neither does Landor seem at any time to have taken trouble about his dress; having, indeed, in later life come to be conspicuously negligent in that particular. In these early Bath days we have to picture him to ourselves simply as a solid, massive, energetic presence, in society sometimes silent and abstracted, sometimes flaming with eloquence and indignation; his figure robust and commanding, but not tall, his face principally noticeable for its bold, full, blue-grey eyes and strong, high-arched brows, with dark hair falling over and half concealing the forehead, and a long, stubborn upper lip, and aggressive set of the jaw, betokening truly enough the passionate temper of the man, yet in conversation readily breaking up into the sunniest, most genial smile.

Such as he was, then, Landor was in high request for the time being in the assembly-rooms both of Bath and Clifton. These, no doubt, were the days in which, as he

wrote long afterwards to Lady Blessington, he suffered so much annoyance from his bad dancing. "How grievously has my heart ached," such is his large way of putting it, "when others were in the full enjoyment of that recreation which I had no right even to partake of." Nevertheless, Landor was kindly looked on by the fair, and only too impetuously ready to answer sigh with sigh. His flirtations were numerous and were carried far. There is even not wanting, in his dealings with and his language concerning women during this brief period, a touch of commonplace rakishness, a shadow of vulgarity nowhere else to be discerned in the ways of this most unvulgar of mankind. But such shadows were merely on the surface. Inwardly, Landor's letters show him ill content, and longing, if he only knew how to find it, for something high and steadfast in his life. He was given as much as ever to solid reading and reflection, and stirred in a moment to wholesome and manly sorrow at the loss of a friend or the breach of an old association. A Mrs. Lambe, whom he had warmly regarded from boyhood, died about this time at Warwick, and soon afterwards came the news of the sudden death in India of Rose Aylmer, the friend of Welsh days to whose casual loan Landor, as we saw, had been indebted for the first hint of *Gebir*. By both these losses Landor was deeply moved, by that of Rose Aylmer in especial his thoughts being for days and nights entirely possessed. During his vigils he wrote the first draft of the little elegy, "carved as it were in ivory or in gems," which in its later form became famous:

"Ah, what avails the sceptred race?
Ah, what the form divine?
What every virtue, every grace?
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

"Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and of sighs
I consecrate to thee."

Just, natural, simple, severely and at the same time hauntingly melodious, however baldly or stoically they may strike the ear attuned to more high-pitched lamentations, these are the lines which made afterwards so deep an impression upon Charles Lamb. Tipsy or sober, it is reported of that impressionable spirit a few years before his death, he would always be repeating *Rose Aylmer*. The effect obtained by the iteration of the young girl's two beautiful names at the beginning of the fourth and fifth lines is an afterthought. In place of this simple, musical invocation, the fourth line had originally begun with a lame explanatory conjunction, "For, Aylmer," and the fifth with a commonplace adjective, "Sweet Aylmer." In the seventh line "memories" is a correction for the alliterative and vaguer "sorrows" of the first draft. Landor's affection for the same lost friend and companion is again expressed, we may remember, in another poem of a much later date headed *Abertawy*, which furnishes a good example of his ordinary manner, part playful, part serious, and not free from slips both of taste and workmanship, in this kind of autobiographical reminiscence, and which ends with the following gravely tender lines:

"Where is she now? Call'd far away
By one she dared not disobey,
To those proud halls, for youth unfit,
Where princes stand and judges sit.
Where Ganges rolls his widest wave
She dropt her blossom in the grave;
Her noble name she never changed,
Nor was her nobler heart estranged."

The losses above mentioned and others occurring in the circle of Landor's friends about this time, 1805—1806, prompted him to compose several pieces of the elegiac kind, both in English and Latin, which he collected and published under the title *Simonidea*. But these elegiac pieces did not stand alone. They were accompanied by others in right of which the volume might just as well have been called *Anacreontica*, namely, a selection, made by Ianthè, of love-poems addressed in English to herself, besides some Latin verses of so free a tenour that Landor was by-and-by ashamed of having published them. "I printed whatever was marked with a pencil by a woman who loved me, and I consulted all her caprices. I added some Latin poetry of my own, more pure in its Latinity than its sentiment. When you read the *Simonidea*, pity and forgive me." Several of Landor's early writings are now excessively rare, more than one, indeed, being only known to exist in a solitary example; but of the *Simonidea*, so far as I have been able to ascertain, not even a single copy has been preserved.

Soon after this, moved, it would seem, partly by his strained finances and partly by his sanguine imagination, Landor conceived the plan of alienating his paternal estate in Staffordshire, in order to acquire another yielding, or capable of being made to yield, larger returns in a wilder part of the country. He turned his thoughts first towards the lakes. Here he made a tour in the spring of 1807, found an estate which enchanted him, beside the small romantic Lake of Loweswater, and at once began negotiations for its purchase. These falling through, he in the next year pitched upon another and a very noble property, which was for sale in a country nearer to his own accustomed haunts, that, namely, of Llanthony, on the Welsh

border. To his overwhelming desire to become lord of Llanthony all impediments had now to give way, with what consequences to himself and others we shall see.

But before the complicated arrangements connected with this purchase were completed, events of great interest in Landor's life had come to pass. First, there was the beginning of his acquaintance with Southey. Of all English writers of that age, they were the two who most resembled each other by their science in the technical craft of letters, by their high and classical feeling for the honour and dignity of the English language, and by the comprehensiveness and solidity of their reading. Ever since Southey had discovered that Landor was the author of *Gebir*, and Landor that Southey was its admiring critic, a preconceived sympathy had sprung up between the two men. Since then Southey had written *Madoc*, the first, and *Thalaba*, the second of his mythological epics, and in *Madoc* had avowedly profited by Landor's example, both as to the way of *seeing*, as he put it, for the purposes of poetry, and as to the management of his blank verse. On his tour in the lake country, Landor, who was no seeker of acquaintances, and indeed once boasted, in his serene way, that he had never accepted a letter of introduction in his life, had missed, and expressed his regret at missing, the opportunity of meeting Southey.

It was in Southey's native Bristol, at the lodgings of his friend Danvers, that he and Landor met for the first time in the spring of 1808. They took to each other at once, and a friendship was formed which lasted without break or abatement for thirty years. In many of their opinions Landor and Southey differed much already, and their differences were destined to increase as time went on, but differences of opinion brought no shadow between them.

Each seems instinctively to have recognized whatever was sterling, loyal, and magnanimous in the other's nature. Each, though this is a minor matter, heartily respected in the other the scrupulous and accomplished literary workman. Each probably liked and had a fellow-feeling for the other's boyish exuberance of vitality and proneness to exaggeration and denunciation. For it is to be noted that Landor's intimacies were almost always with men of emphatic and declamatory eloquence like his own. Parr, the most honoured friend of his youth, Southey and Francis Hare, the most cherished of his manhood, were all three Olympian talkers in their degree. But Landor and his kindred Olympians, it seems, understood each other, and knew how to thunder and lighten without collision. These last, as it happens, are the very words afterwards used by Southey in preparing a common friend for the kind of personage he would meet in Landor. "He does more than any of the gods of all my mythologies, for his very words are thunder and lightning, such is the power and splendour with which they burst out. But all is perfectly natural; there is no trick about him, no preaching, no playing off." If we thus have Southey's testimony at once to the impressiveness and to the integrity of Landor's personality, we have Landor's to "the genial voice and radiant eye" of Southey, besides a hundred other expressions of affection for his person and admiration for his character and his powers.

With the immediate result of his own and Landor's first conversation Southey could not fail to be gratified. He had been forced of late to abandon his most cherished task, the continuance of his series of mythologic epics. The plain reason was that he could not afford to spend time on work so little remunerative. Landor, when Southey told

him this, was in an instant all generosity and delicacy, begging to be allowed to print future productions of the kind at his own expense—"as many as you will write, and as many copies as you please." In all this there was not the least taint of patronage or condescension on the part of the magnificent young squire and scholar towards the struggling, although already distinguished, man of letters, his senior by only a year. Landor was as incapable of assuming superiority on any grounds but those of character and intellect as of enduring such assumption in others. Southey, as it turned out, only made practical use of his friend's offer to the extent of allowing him to buy a considerable number of copies of *Kehama* when that work appeared. But the encouragement was everything to him, and had for its consequence that *Kehama*, already begun and dropped, was industriously resumed and finished, and followed in due course by *Roderick*, the manuscript of either poem being dutifully sent off in successive instalments as it was written for Landor to read and criticise. At the same time an active and intimate correspondence sprung up between the two men, and in after-years supplied, indeed, the chief aliment of their friendship, their meetings being, from the force of circumstances, rare.

The next event in Landor's life was his sudden and brief appearance as a man of action on the theatre of European war. Napoleon Buonaparte had just carried into effect the infamous plot which he had conceived in order to make himself master of Spain and Portugal. But before his brother Joseph had time to be proclaimed king at Madrid, all Spain was up in arms. Against the French armies of occupation there sprang up from one end of the country to the other first a tumultuary and then an organized resistance. So swift, efficient, and unanimous a rising had

nowhere else been witnessed. A people, it seemed, had at last been found with manhood enough in their veins to refuse the yoke of France, and in the hearts of all friends of liberty despair began to give way to hope. How much of anarchical self-seeking and distracted, pusillanimous intrigue in reality lay latent in these patriot bosoms was little suspected in the enthusiasm of the hour. In England especially, the Spaniards were passionately acclaimed as a race of heroes, on whose victory depended the very salvation of the world. Instant help, both in men and money, was despatched to the insurgents by the English Government. Poets and orators extolled their deeds; volunteers pressed to join their standards. While Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge, from the seclusion of their lakes and mountains, did their utmost to swell the tide of popular emotion, Landor on his part was not content with words. One evening at Brighton he found himself "preaching a crusade" to an audience of two Irish gentlemen, who caught his ardour, and the three determined to start for Spain without more ado. Early in August they set sail from Falmouth for Corunna, which was the seat of an English mission under Stuart, afterwards ambassador in Paris. From Corunna Landor addressed a letter to the provincial government, enclosing a gift of ten thousand reals for the relief of the inhabitants of Venturada, a town burnt by the French, and at the same time proclaiming that he would equip at his own cost, and accompany to the field, all volunteers up to the number of a thousand who might choose to join him. Both gift and proclamation were thankfully acknowledged; a body of volunteers was promptly organized; and Landor marched with them through Leon and Gallicia to join the Spanish army under Blake in the mountains of Biscay. In the meantime his

incurably jealous and inflammable spirit of pride, inflammable especially in contact with those in office or authority, had caught fire at a depreciatory phrase dropped by the English envoy, Stuart, at one of the meetings of the Junta. Stuart's expression had not really referred to Landor at all, but he chose to apply it to himself, and on his march accordingly indited and made public an indignant letter of remonstrance.

To the groundless disgust which Landor had thus conceived and vented at a fancied slight, was soon added that with which he was more reasonably inspired by the incompetence and sloth of the Spanish general, Blake. He remained with the army of the North for several idle weeks in the neighbourhood of Reÿnosa and Aguilar. He was very desirous of seeing Madrid, but denied himself the excursion for fear of missing a battle, which after all was never fought. It was not until after the end of September, when the convention between Sir Hew Dalrymple and Junot had been signed in Portugal, and when Blake's army broke up its quarters at Reÿnosa, that Landor, his band of volunteers having apparently melted away in the meanwhile, separated himself from the Spanish forces and returned suddenly to England. He narrowly escaped being taken prisoner in the endeavour to travel by way of Bilbao, which had then just been re-entered by the French under Ney. The thanks of the supreme Junta for his services were in course of time conveyed to him at home, together with the title and commission of an honorary colonel in the Spanish army.

Landor had departed leaving his countrymen in a frenzy of enthusiasm. He found them on his return in a frenzy of indignation and disgust. The military compromise just effected in Portugal was denounced by popular clamour in

terms of unmeasured fury, and not by popular clamour only. Men of letters and of thought are habitually too much given to declaiming at their ease against the delinquencies of men of action and affairs. The inevitable friction of practical politics generates heat enough already, and the office of the political thinker and critic should be to supply not heat but light. The difficulties which attend his own unmolested task, the task of seeking after and proclaiming salutary truths, should teach him to make allowance for the far more urgent difficulties which beset the politician, the man obliged, amid the clash of interests and temptations, to practise from hand to mouth, and at his peril, the most uncertain and at the same time the most indispensable of the experimental arts. The early years of this century in England may not have been years remarkable for wise or consistent statesmanship; they were certainly remarkable for the frantic vituperation of those in power by those who looked on. The writers of the Lake school were at this time as loud and as little reasonable in their outcries as any group of men in the kingdom, and Southey was the loudest of them all. His letters, and especially his letters to Landor, on the public questions of the hour, can hardly be read even now without a twinge of humiliation at the spectacle of a man of his knowledge, sincerity, and candour giving way to so idle a fury of misjudgment and malediction. Landor, on his part, is moderate by comparison, and has a better hold both of facts and principles, although he is ready to go great lengths with his friend in condemnation of the English ministers and commanders.

In the succeeding winter and spring nothing but Spain was in men's minds or conversation. After the victory and death of Sir John Moore at Corunna in January, 1809,

Landor was for a while on the point of sailing for that country as a volunteer for the second time. Eventually, however, he forbore, private affairs in connexion with his new property at Llanthony helping among other things to detain him. In order to effect this purchase Landor had required as much as 20,000*l.* over and above the sum realized by the sale of his Staffordshire estate. For this purpose he made up his mind to sell Tachbrook, the smaller of the two properties in Warwickshire destined to devolve to him at the death of his mother. Her consent was necessary to this step, as well as that of his brothers, and an act of parliament authorizing the breach of the entail. All these matters, together with some minor arrangements protecting the interests of Mrs. Landor and her other children by charges on the new estate, and the like, were got through in the summer of this year (1809). Early in the autumn of the same year we find Landor established in temporary quarters on his new property. It was a wild and striking country that he had chosen for his future home. Most readers are probably familiar with the distant aspect of those mountains, whose sombre masses and sweeping outlines arrest the eye of the spectator looking westward over the Welsh marches from the summit of the Malvern hills. These are the Black or Hatterill mountains of Monmouthshire and Brecknockshire. Of all their recesses the most secluded and most romantic, although not the most remote, is the valley of Ewias, within which stands the ruined priory of Llanthony.[1] This valley winds

[1] Pronounce Llanthóny; said to be short for Llandevi Nanthodeni, *i.e.*, church of St. David by the water of Hodeni. The early history of this famous border priory is better known than that of almost any other foundation of the same kind; see the articles of Mr. Roberts in *Archæologia Cambrensis*, vol. i., No. 3, and of Mr. Freeman,

for some twelve miles between two high continuous ridges, of which the sides are now flowing and now precipitous, here broken into wooded dingles, here receding into grassy amphitheatres, and there heaped with the copse-grown ruins of ancient landslips. Along its bed there races or loiters according to the weather—and it is a climate notorious for rain—the stream Hodeni, Honddu, or Hondy. The opening of the valley is towards the south, and was blocked in ancient times with thickets and morasses, so that its only approach was over one or other of its lofty lateral ridges. In those days the scene was wont to lay upon the few who ever entered it the spell of solitude and penitential awe. It was said that St. David had for a time dwelt here as a hermit. In the reign of William Rufus a certain knight having found his way into the valley during the chase, the call fell upon him to do the like; the fame of his conversion reached the court; he was joined by a second seeker after the holy life, then by others; gifts and wealth poured in upon them; they were enrolled as a brotherhood of the order of St. Augustine, and built themselves a priory in the midst of the valley, on a level field half a furlong above the stream. Its ruins are still standing dark and venerable amid the verdure of the valley, a rambling assemblage of truncated towers, disroofed presbytery, shattered aisles, and modernized outbuildings. The remains of the prior's lodgings, together with that one of the two western towers to which they are contiguous, are fitted up, the ancient sanctities all forgotten, as a bailiff's house and inn. The avocations of dairy, scullery, and larder are carried on beneath the shelter of the other tower, while the

ibid., 3rd series, vol. i.; also a sketch by the present writer in the *Portfolio*, January, 1881, from which last two or three sentences are repeated in the text.

wild rose and snapdragon wave from the crevices overhead, and the pigeons flit and nestle among the shaftless openings.

Such as Llanthony Priory is now, such, making allowance for some partial dilapidations which neither he nor his successors took enough care to prevent, it in all essentials was when Landor took it over from its former owner in the spring of 1809, and along with it the fine estate to which it owes its name. The property is some eight miles long, and includes for that distance the whole sweep of the vale of Ewias. The valley farms contain rich pasturage and fairly productive corn-lands, while the eastern ridge is covered with grass, and the western with richly heathered moor. The moors yield tolerable shooting, and the Hondy is famous for its trout. But it was not for the sake of shooting or fishing that Landor came to Llanthony. He was, indeed, devoted to animals, but not in the ordinary English sense of being devoted to the pastime of killing them. One of the points by which observers used afterwards to be most struck in Landor was the infinite affection and mutual confidence which subsisted between him and his pets of the dumb creation, both dogs and others, with whom the serenity of his relations used to remain perfectly undisturbed throughout his most explosive demonstrations against the delinquencies of his own species. But his sympathies for animals were not confined to pets. In early days he had plied both gun and rod, but by this time or soon afterwards he seems to have quite given them up. Even in youth he had suffered acute remorse on one day finding a partridge, which he had bagged over night and supposed dead, still alive in the morning. Cruelty was for him the chief—"if not indeed," as he once put it, "the only"—sin, and cruelty to animals was at least as bad as

cruelty to men. Angling, in later life, he once wrote of as "that sin." In a letter to his sister he writes more tolerantly, and with a touch of his peculiar charm, of field sports in general: "Let men do these things if they will. Perhaps there is no harm in it; perhaps it makes them no crueller than they would be otherwise. But it is hard to take away what we cannot give, and life is a pleasant thing —at least to birds. No doubt the young ones say tender things to one another, and even the old ones do not dream of death."

If Landor was thus little of a sportsman, there was another province of a country gentleman's pursuits into which he could enter with all his heart, and that was planting. He loved trees as he loved flowers, not with any scientific or practical knowledge, but with a poet's keenness of perception, heightened by a peculiar vein of reflective and imaginative association. He could not bear either the unnecessary plucking of the one or felling of the other. "Ah," he represents himself in one of his dialogues as exclaiming at the sight of two fallen pines in Lombardy—

". . . Ah, Don Pepino! old trees in their living state are the only things that money cannot command. Rivers leave their beds, run into cities, and traverse mountains for it; obelisks and arches, palaces and temples, amphitheatres and pyramids, rise up like exhalations at its bidding; even the free spirit of Man, the only thing great on earth, crouches and cowers in its presence. It passes away and vanishes before venerable trees. What a sweet odour is here! whence comes it? sweeter it appears to me and stronger than the pine itself."

The interlocutor, Don Pepino, explains that the odour proceeds from a neighbouring linden, and that the linden, a very old and large one, is doomed; whereupon Landor—

"O Don Pepino! the French, who abhor whatever is old and whatever is great, have spared it; the Austrians, who sell their fortresses and their armies, nay, sometimes their daughters, have not sold it: must it fall? . . .

"How many fond and how many lively thoughts have been nurtured under this tree! how many kind hearts have beaten here! Its branches are not so numerous as the couples they have invited to sit beside it, nor its blossoms and leaves as the expressions of tenderness it has witnessed. What appeals to the pure all-seeing heavens! what similitudes to the everlasting mountains! what protestations of eternal truth and constancy from those who now are earth; they, and their shrouds, and their coffins!"

The passage in which Landor has best expressed his feeling about flowers is one of verse, and one of the few in his writings which are well known, though not so well as by its unmatched delicacy and grave, unobtrusive sweetness it deserves:

"When hath wind or rain
Borne hard upon weak plants that wanted me,
And I (however they might bluster round)
Walkt off? 'Twere most ungrateful: for sweet scents
Are the swift vehicles of still sweeter thoughts,
And nurse and pillow the dull memory
That would let drop without them her best stores.
They bring me tales of youth and tones of love,
And 'tis and ever was my wish and way
To let all flowers live freely, and all die
(Whene'er their Genius bids their souls depart)
Among their kindred in their native place.
I never pluck the rose; the violet's head
Hath shaken with my breath upon its bank
And not reproacht it; the ever-sacred cup
Of the pure lily hath between my hands
Felt safe, unsoil'd, nor lost one grain of gold."

"I love these beautiful and peaceful tribes," Landor says elsewhere, with special reference to the flowers of Lian-

thony; "they always meet one in the same place at the same season; and years have no more effect on their placid countenances than on so many of the most favoured gods." Such are the exquisite tendernesses of feeling and imagination which go together in Landor with his masterful energy and strength.

With these tastes and predilections, then, and in his lordly, imaginative, sanguinely unpractical manner, Landor entered upon his new career as the beneficent landowner of a neglected and backward neighbourhood. He would have the priory restored, and for that purpose portions of the existing ruins were taken down, and their stones carefully numbered. He would raise a new mansion for himself and his heirs, and he set the builders to work accordingly upon a site a quarter of a mile above the ruins. Communications in the district were by rough bridle-paths and fords, and Landor set gangs of men about the construction of roads and bridges. Agriculture was miserably primitive; he imported sheep from Segovia, and applied to Southey and other friends for tenants who should introduce and teach improved methods of cultivation. The inhabitants were drunken, impoverished, and morose; he was bent upon reclaiming and civilizing them. The woods had suffered from neglect or malice; he would clothe the sides of the valley with cedars of Lebanon. With that object he bought two thousand cones, calculated to yield a hundred seeds each, intending to do ten times as much afterwards, and exulting in the thought of the two million cedar-trees which he would thus leave for the shelter and the delight of posterity.

While all these great operations were in progress, Landor was not a permanent resident, but only a frequent visitor, on his estate, inhabiting for a few weeks at a time

the rooms in the church tower, and living in the intervals principally at Bath. Here, in the early spring of 1811, he met a young lady at a ball, and as soon as he had set eyes on her exclaimed, in the true Landorian manner, "By heaven! that's the nicest girl in the room, and I'll marry her." And marry her he did; the adventure quickly ending in that irreversible manner, instead of, as others as rashly begun had ended, in protestations, misunderstandings, and retreat. Mr. Forster appositely contrasts Landor's reckless action with his weighty and magnificent words concerning marriage: "Death itself to the reflecting mind is less serious than marriage. The elder plant is cut down that the younger may have room to flourish: a few tears drop into the loosened soil, and buds and blossoms spring over it. Death is not even a blow, is not even a pulsation; it is a pause. But marriage unrolls the awful lot of numberless generations. Health, Genius, Honour, are the words inscribed on some; on others are Disease, Fatuity, and Infamy." But it was Landor's fate to be thus wise only for others; wise on paper; wise after the event; wise, in a word, in every and any manner except such as could conduce to his own welfare. His marriage was not a happy one. His bride, Julia Thuillier, was the portionless daughter of an unprosperous banker at Banbury, said to be descended from an old Swiss family. Landor, with his moods of lofty absence and pre-occupation, and with the tumultuous and disconcerting nature, sometimes, of his descents into the region of reality, must at best have been a trying companion to live with. Nevertheless it would seem as though a woman capable of sharing his thoughts, and of managing him in his fits of passion, as his wiser friends were accustomed to manage him in later years, by yielding to the storm at first, until his

own sense of humour would be aroused and it would disperse itself in peals of laughter, might have had an enviable, if not an easy, life with one so great-minded and so fundamentally kind and courteous. Mrs. Landor seems to have had none of the gifts of the domestic artist; she was not one of those fine spirits who study to create, out of the circumstances and characters with which they have to deal, the best attainable ideal of a home; but a commonplace provincial beauty enough, although lively and agreeable in her way. "God forbid," in conversation once growled Landor, who was habitually reticent on his private troubles, "that I should do otherwise than declare that she always *was* agreeable—to every one but *me*." She was sixteen years or more younger than her husband; a fact of which, when differences occurred, she seems to have been not slow to remind him; and there is impartial evidence to show that, in some at least of the disputes which led to breaches more or less permanent between them, the immediately offending tongue was not the husband's but the wife's. He himself once breaks out, in commenting on Milton's line,

> "Because thou hast hearken'd to the voice of thy wife,"

"there are very few who have not done this, *bon gré, mal gré;* and many have thought it curse enough of itself." These matters, however, belong to a later point of our narrative. At first the little wife, with her golden hair, her smiles, and her spirits, seems to have done very well. She accompanied Landor on his visits to Llanthony, where they received as guests, at first in the tower rooms of the priory, and later in some that had been got habitable in the new house, several members of his family and friends. The Southeys, to Landor's great delight, were his first

visitors, coming in the summer of 1811, within a few months of his marriage. Later came his sisters, and later again, his mother.

But neither the care of his estate nor his marriage had the least interrupted the habitual occupations of Landor's mind. What he really most valued in a beautiful country was the fit and inspiring theatre which it afforded for his meditations. Whether in town or country he reflected and composed habitually out walking, and therefore preferred at all times to walk alone. "There were half-hours," he represents himself as saying to Southey, "when, although in good humour and good spirits, we would on no consideration be disturbed by the necessity of talking. In this interval there is neither storm nor sunshine of the mind, but calm and (as the farmers call it) *growing* weather, in which the blades of thought spring up and dilate insensibly. Whatever I do I must do in the open air, or in the silence of night; either is sufficient; but I prefer the hours of exercise, or, what is next to exercise, of field-repose." In these years Landor was composing much. In 1810 he printed a couple of Latin odes, *Ad Gustavum Regem*, *Ad Gustavum exsulem*, and began the first of his *Idyllia Heroica* in that language, on the touching story of the priest Coresus, his love and sacrifice. He also grappled for the first time with English tragedy. His choice of subject was dictated by his own and the general interest in and enthusiasm for Spain. He fixed on that romantic and semi-mythical episode of early Spanish history, the alliance of the heroic Count Julian with the invading Moors, of whom he had been formerly the scourge, against his own people and their king, Roderick, in order to avenge the outrage which Roderick had done to his daughter. The same subject was in various forms occu-

pying both Southey and Scott about the same time; Southey in his epic of *Roderick*, called in the first draft *Pelayo*, and sent in instalments as it was written to Landor; and Scott in his *Vision of Don Roderick*. Landor had begun his tragedy, as it happened, at the same time as Southey his epic, in the late summer of 1810, and he finished it early the next spring. His tragedy and his engagement are amusingly mixed up in a letter written to Southey in April, and ending "Adieu, and congratulate me. I forgot to say that I have added thirty-five verses to Scene 2 of Act III."

Landor's theory was that the passions should in poetry, and especially in tragedy, be represented "naked, like the heroes and the Gods." In realizing the high and desperate passions of Roderick and Julian, the offender and the avenger, he has girded himself for rivalry with whatever is austere, haughty, pregnant, and concise in the works of the masters whom he most admired for those qualities. But in raising his characters up to this ideal height, in seeking to delineate their passions in forms of this heroic energy and condensation, this "nakedness," to use his own word, Landor has not, I think, succeeded in keeping them human. Human to himself, during the process of their creation, they unquestionably were; "I brought before me," he writes, "the various characters, the very tones of their voices, their forms, complexions, and step. In the daytime I laboured, and at night unburdened my mind, shedding many tears." Nevertheless they do not live in like manner for the reader. The conception of Count Julian, desperately loving both his dishonoured daughter and the country against which he has turned in order to chastise her dishonourer; inexorably bent on a vengeance the infliction of which costs him all the while the direst

agony and remorse; is certainly grandiose and terrible enough. But even this conception does not seem to be realized, except at moments, in a manner to justify the enthusiastic praise bestowed upon it by De Quincey, in his erratic, fragmentary, and otherwise grudging notes on Landor. Still less are we livingly impressed by the vanquished, remorseful, still defiant and intriguing Roderick, the injured and distracted Egilona, the dutiful and outraged Covilla, her lover Sisabert, or the vindictive and suspicious Moorish leader Muza. These and the other characters are made to declare themselves by means of utterances often admirably energetic, and of images sometimes magnificently daring; yet they fail to convince or carry us away. This effect is partly due, no doubt, to defect of dramatic construction. The scenes of the play succeed each other by no process of organic sequence or evolution —a fact admitted by Landor himself when he afterwards called it a series of dialogues rather than a drama. Some of them are themselves dramatically sterile, tedious, and confusing. Others, and isolated lines and sayings in almost all, are written, if not with convincing felicity, at any rate with overmastering force. On the whole, we shall be more inclined to agree with Lamb's impression of *Count Julian* than with De Quincey's. "I must read again Landor's *Julian*," writes Lamb, in 1815. "I have not read it for some time. I think he must have failed in Roderick, for I remember nothing of him, nor of any distinct character as a character — only fine sounding passages." The reader may perhaps judge of the quality of the work by the following fragment, exhibiting at its highest point of tension the struggle between the enemies Roderick and Julian after Roderick has fallen into Julian's power:

"*Julian.* Could I speak patiently who speak to thee,
I would say more . . . part of thy punishment
It should be, to be taught.
Roderigo. Reserve thy wisdom
Until thy patience come, its best ally.
I learn no lore, of peace or war, from thee.
Julian. No, thou shalt study soon another tongue,
And suns more ardent shall mature thy mind.
Either the cross thou bearest, and thy knees
Among the silent caves of Palestine
Wear the sharp flints away with midnight prayer;
Or thou shalt keep the fasts of Barbary,
Shalt wait amid the crowds that throng the well
From sultry noon till the skies fade again,
To draw up water and to bring it home
In the crackt gourd of some vile testy knave,
Who spurns thee back with bastinadoed foot
For ignorance or delay of his command,
Roderigo. Rather the poison or the bowstring.
Julian. "Slaves
To others' passions die such deaths as those:
Slaves to their own should die—
Roderigo. What worse?
Julian. Their own.
Roderigo. Is this thy counsel, renegade?
Julian. Not mine;
I point a better path, nay, force thee on.
I shelter thee from every brave man's sword
While I am near thee: I bestow on thee
Life: if thou die, 'tis when thou sojournest
Protected by this arm and voice no more;
'Tis slavishly, 'tis ignominiously,
'Tis by a villain's knife.
Roderigo. By whose?
Julian. Roderigo's."

Landor's severe method does not admit much scenic or accessory ornament in a work of this kind, but he has

made a vivid and pleasant use of his own recent Spanish experiences in the passage where Julian speaks to his daughter of the retreats where she may hide her shame:

> "Wide are the regions of our far-famed land;
> Thou shalt arrive at her remotest bounds,
> See her best people, choose some holiest house;
> Whether where Castro from surrounding vines
> Hears the hoarse ocean roar among his caves,
> And through the fissure in the green churchyard
> The wind wail loud the calmest summer day;
> Or where Santona leans against the hill,
> Hidden from sea and land by groves and bowers."

And again—

> "If strength be wanted for security,
> Mountains the guard, forbidding all approach
> With iron-pointed and uplifted gates,
> Thou wilt be welcome too in Aguilar,
> Impenetrable, marble-turreted,
> Surveying from aloft the limpid ford,
> The massive fane, the sylvan avenue;
> Whose hospitality I proved myself,
> A willing leader in no impious war
> When fame and freedom urged me; or mayst dwell
> In Reynosas' dry and thriftless dale,
> Unharvested beneath October moons,
> Among those frank and cordial villagers."

For the rest, *Count Julian* is not poor in solid and profound reflexions upon life, carved, polished, and compressed in the manner which was Landor's alone, as thus:

> "Wretched is he a woman hath forgiven;
> With her forgiveness ne'er hath love return'd;"

or thus—

> "Of all who pass us in life's drear descent
> We grieve the most for those who *wisht* to die."

During the composition of *Count Julian* Landor had been in close correspondence with Southey, and had submitted to him the manuscript as it progressed. He had at one moment entertained the obviously impracticable idea of getting his tragedy put on the stage by Kemble. This abandoned, he offered it to Longmans for publication. They declined to print it either at their own costs, or even, when he proposed that method, at the author's. Whereupon Landor writes to Southey: "We have lately had cold weather here, and fires. On receiving the last letter of Mr. Longman I committed to the flames my tragedy of *Ferranti and Giulio*, with which I intended to surprise you, and am resolved that never verse of mine shall be hereafter committed to anything else. My literary career has been a very curious one. You cannot imagine how I feel relieved at laying down its burden, and abandoning its tissue of humiliations. I fancied I had at last acquired the right tone of tragedy, and was treading down at heel the shoes of Alfieri." The resolution recorded with this composed and irrevocable air lasted no longer than the choler which had provoked it; and though the play of *Ferranti and Giulio*, all but a few fragments, had been irretrievably sacrificed, we find *Count Julian* within a few months offered to and accepted by Mr. Murray, on the introduction of Southey, and actually published at the beginning of 1812.

The same house brought out in the same year another production of Landor's of a totally different character, namely, a *Commentary on Memoirs of Mr. Fox.* In the biography of Landor this volume is of peculiar interest. It contains his views on men, books, and governments, set forth in the manner that was most natural to him, that is miscellaneously and without sequence, in a prose which

has none of the inequalities nor opacities of his verse, but is at once condensed and lucid, weighty without emphasis, and stately without effort or inflation. The fulness of Landor's mind, the clearness and confidence of his decisions, the mixed dogmatism and urbanity of his manner, are nowhere more characteristically displayed. The text for his deliverances is furnished by Trotter's *Memoirs of Fox*, then lately published. His motives in writing are declared in the following words: "I would represent his (Fox's) actions to his contemporaries as I believe they will appear to posterity. I would destroy the impression of the book before me, because I am firmly persuaded that its tendency would be pernicious. The author is an amiable man, so was the subject of his memoir. But of all the statesmen who have been conversant in the management of our affairs, during a reign the most disastrous in our annals, the example of Mr. Fox, if followed up, would be the most fatal to our interests and glory." Elsewhere he speaks of the sacrifices made during the preparation of the book to appease the scruples of its publisher. We know from his letters that one of his schemes in those days was to render himself and other lovers of free speech independent of the publishers, by establishing a printing-press of his own at Llanthony, "at a cost of 5000*l*.," and "for the purpose, at much private loss, disquiet, and danger, of setting the public mind more erect, and throwing the two factions into the dust." The *Commentary* as actually printed contains, first, a dedicatory address to the President of the United States, deprecating the war then imminent, in consequence of the fiscal policy of Canning, between them and the mother country. In the course of this dedication we find Landor putting forward for the first time one of the fundamental articles of his creed, in

the shape of the following classification of animated beings:

"Consider, sir, what are the two nations, if I must call them two, which are about, not to terminate, but to extend their animosities by acts of violence and slaughter. If you think as I do, and free men, allowing for the degree of their capacities, generally think alike, you will divide the creatures of the Almighty into three parts: first, men who enjoy the highest perfection of liberty and civilization; secondly, men who live under the despotism of one person or more, and are not permitted to enjoy their reason for the promotion of their happiness; and thirdly, the brute creation, which is subject also to arbitrary will, and whose happiness their slender powers of reasoning (for some they have) is inadequate to promote. These three classes, in my view of the subject, stand at equal distances."

After the dedication follows a preface full of measured invective against those responsible for the political and military affairs of England, varied by observations on the character of the French and of their ruler, for the character of which see above (p. 34), and by the following fine oratorical outburst, a little less accurately wrought and balanced than it would have been in Landor's later prose, in which the stringency of the penal laws against the poor is contrasted with the lenient treatment of a State delinquent like Lord Melville, long Lord Privy Seal for Scotland and President of the Board of Control for India:

"If an unfortunate mother at a distance from home, carrying with her a half-starved infant, along roads covered with snow, should snatch a shirt from a hedge to protect it from a miserable death, she is condemned to die. That she never could have known the law, that she never could have assented to its equity, avails her nothing; that she was pierced by the cries of her own offspring; that it was not merely the instigation of want, but the force of omnipotent nature, the very voice of God himself, the preservation of a human being, of her own, the cause of her wanderings and her wretchedness, of her captivity and her chains: what are these in opposition

to an act of parliament? she dies. Look on the other side. A nobleman of most acute judgment, well versed in all the usages of his country, rich, powerful, commanding, with a sway more absolute and unresisted than any of its ancient monarchs, the whole kingdom in which he was a subject, with all its boroughs, and its shires and its courts and its universities, and in addition, as merely a fief, the empire of all India; who possessed more lucrative patronage than all the crowned heads in Europe; let this illustrious character, to whom so many men of rank looked up as their protector, and whom senators and statesmen acknowledged as their guide; let this distinguished member of the British parliament break suddenly through the law which he himself had brought into the House for the conservation of our property, without necessity, without urgency, without temptation—and behold the consequence."

The consequence is somewhat flat; and omitting Landor's account of Melville's acquittal and careless bearing we may remember that the most weighty and pointed of all his epigrams in verse is that which he directed against the same delinquent:

"God's laws declare
Thou shalt not swear
By aught in heaven above or earth below.
'Upon my honour!' Melville cries.
He swears, and lies.
Does Melville then break God's commandment? No."

Landor's preface further contains reflections on the utility and the lessons of history for statesmen, and on their neglect by Pitt and Fox; and ends with the expression of a wish for the continuance of the present ministry in office, and an urgent plea in favour of Catholic emancipation. In the body of his book he takes extracts from Trotter's *Memoirs* as they come, and appends to each his own reflexions. Literature and politics, personal topics and gen-

eral, succeed each other promiscuously. Here is what Landor has to say of Burke and his policy during the French revolution: "Burke, the only member of Parliament whose views were extensive, and whose reading was all turned to practical account, was more violent than even Lord Grenville for a declaration of hostilities. His unrivalled eloquence was fatal to our glory; it silenced our renown for justice and for wisdom, undermined our internal prosperity, and invaded our domestic peace." Then follows a long disparaging criticism of Spenser, whose poetry always seemed to Landor fantastic, unreal, and somewhat wearisome; then a comparative note on Chaucer and Burns; and then, after discursive criticisms on the creations of Caliban and Cyclops, on Addison, and on the Spenserian stanza, comes a conclusion of Ciceronian gravity and grace. "It is better to leave off where reflexion may rest than where passion may be excited; and it is soothing to take the last view of politics from among the works of the imagination. . . . An escape in this manner from the mazes of politics and the discord of party, leaves such sensations on the heart as are experienced by the disinterested and sober man, after some public meeting, when he has quitted the crowded and noisy room, the crooked and narrow streets, the hisses and huzzas of the rabble, poor and rich, and enters his own grounds again, and meets his own family at the gate." Immediately after which Landor turns round again to the charge in a final, denunciatory postscript. This remarkable outpouring of an authoritative, versatile, and richly stored mind was destined to have no influence and few readers. Like the *Simonidea*, though in deference to a different order of susceptibilities, it seems to have been recalled almost as soon as it was published, and the only copy known to exist is one formerly in the

possession of Southey, and now in that of Lord Houghton.

Besides his two tragedies, *Count Julian* and the lost *Ferranti and Giulio*, Landor wrote during the latter part of this Llanthony period a comedy called the *Charitable Dowager*, the proceeds of which he destined for the relief of an old acquaintance in Spain, for whose hospitality he had good reason to be grateful when he found himself prevented from entering Bilbao. The piece was, however, neither produced nor even printed, and considering the quality of Landor's later efforts in the comic vein, its loss is probably not to be regretted. Landor had in these days been also at work at what he in his heart cared for most of all, his *Idyllia* and other poems in Latin; which Valpy, he writes, "the greatest of all coxcombs," very much wished to publish, but which he preferred to print on his own account at Oxford, the proceeds, if any, to be distributed among the distressed poor of Leipzig.

This was towards the close of 1813. In the meantime Landor's magnificent projects as a landlord had been crumbling under his hands. Less than four years had brought his affairs to such a pass as utterly to disgust him with Llanthony, Wales, and the Welsh. There was scarcely one of his undertakings but had proved abortive. There was scarcely a public authority of his district against whom he had not a grievance, or a neighbour, high or low, with whom he had not come into collision, or a tenant or labourer on his estate who had not turned against him. The origin of these troubles sprang almost always either from Landor's headlong generosity, or else from his impracticable punctiliousness. He had a genius for the injudicious virtues, and those which recoil against their possessor. Of his besetting faults, pride and anger, pride constantly as-

sured him that he was not as other men, anger as constantly resented the behaviour of other men when it fell below the standard of his own. He would insist on expecting ancient Roman principles in all with whom he came in contact, and when he was undeceived would flame into Rhadamanthine rage against the culprit, idealising peccadilloes into enormities, and denouncing and seeking to have them chastised accordingly. Thus he made bad worse, and by his lofty, impetuous, unwise ways, turned the whole country-side into a hostile camp. It is true that luck and the characters of those with whom he had to deal were much against him. His first disenchantments arose in the course of communications with men in authority. He wrote to the bishop of his diocese, asking permission to restore for service a part of Llanthony priory. His first letter received no answer. He repeated his request in a second, in the course of which he remarked, "God alone is great enough for me to ask anything of twice;" to which there came an answer coldly sanctioning his proposal, but saying that an act of parliament would be required before it could be carried out; whereupon Landor, who had lately had enough of acts of parliament, allowed the matter to drop. At the Monmouthshire assizes in 1812 he was on the grand jury. The members of that body having been in the usual formal terms adjured by the judge to lay before him whatever evidences they possessed of felony committed in the county, what must our noble Roman do but take the adjuration literally, and in defiance of all usage deliver with his own hand to the judge a written accusation of felony against an influential rascal of the neighbourhood, an attorney and surveyor of taxes; coupled with a complaint against his brother jurors for neglect of duty in refusing to inquire into the case. The judge took no notice of the communi-

cation, and Landor, having naturally gained nothing by his action except the resentful or contemptuous shrugs of his fellow-jurors, closed the incident with a second letter of polite sarcasm, in which he wrote, "I acknowledge my error, and must atone for my presumption. But I really thought your lordship was in earnest, seeing you, as I did, in the robes of justice, and hearing you speak in the name and with the authority of the laws." About the same time, partly on the suggestion of the one or two gentlemen of the neighbourhood who had culture and character enough to be his friends, Landor applied to the Duke of Beaufort, the lord lieutenant, to be put on the commission of the peace of the county. There was no resident magistrate within ten miles of Llanthony, and yet his application was refused. Partly his politics, partly the fact that a brother of the Duke's had been foreman of the grand jury at the recent assize, explain the refusal. Landor thereupon wrote a temperate letter to the Lord Chancellor (Eldon), pointing out the necessity of a magistrate being appointed for his neighbourhood; and when he received no answer, followed it up by another, haughtier, but not less calm and measured, in which he describes his qualifications and his pursuits, and contrasts them in a strain of grave irony with those usually thought sufficient for a public servant: "I never now will accept, my lord, anything whatever that can be given by ministers or by chancellors, not even the dignity of a county justice, the only honour or office I ever have solicited."

Landor's worst troubles at Llanthony did not, however, proceed from men in high station, but from his own tenants and labourers. He found the Welsh peasantry churlish, malicious, and unimprovable. "If drunkenness, idleness, mischief, and revenge are the principal characteristics

of the savage state, what nation—I will not say in Europe, but in the world—is so singularly tattooed with them as the Welsh?" And again, "The earth contains no race of human beings so totally vile and worthless as the Welsh." The French themselves seemed no longer odious in comparison. Their government Landor had come to regard as at any rate more efficient and better administered than ours; and after three years' experience of the ingratitude, thriftlessness, and lawlessness of the people round about him, we find him already half determined to go and make his home in France. But things would probably never have really come to that pass had it not been for the malpractices of an English tenant, to whom Landor had looked most of all for the improvement of his property. This was one Betham, whose family was known, and one of his sisters highly esteemed, by both Lamb and Southey. Betham had used Southey's name to introduce himself to Landor as a tenant, and had been accepted, he and his family, with open arms in consequence. Landor rented him first one and then another of his best farms on terms of reckless liberality, although he knew nothing of agriculture, and his previous career had been that, first, of an usher in a school, and then of a petty officer on board an East India Company's ship. He is the same whom Lamb had in his mind when, years afterwards, he wrote to Landor, "I knew all your Welsh annoyancers, the measureless B.'s. I knew a quarter of a mile of them. Seventeen brothers and sixteen sisters, as they appear to me in memory. There was one of them that used to fix his long legs on my fender and tell a story of a shark every night, endless, immortal. How have I grudged the salt-sea ravener not having had his gorge of him." This unconscionable tenant not only did nothing for the land, but misconducted

himself scandalously, holding open house for his brothers and his sisters, his father and his father's friends, associating in the ale-houses with the scum of the neighbourhood, neglecting, and by-and-by refusing, to pay his rent, and when at last Landor lost patience, leaguing himself with other defaulting tenants, and with every malicious attorney and every thievish idler in the country-side, to make his landlord's existence intolerable. Landor's rents were withheld, his game poached, his plantations damaged, his timber stolen, his character maligned, and even his life threatened. He was like a lion baited by curs. He was plunged up to the neck in lawsuits. In the actions and counter-actions that were coming up for trial continually between himself and his tenants and neighbours, the local courts and juries were generally adverse to him, the local attorneys insolent. One of these, on some unusual provocation, Landor beat. "I treated him as he deserved. He brought a criminal action against me." In the case of a London counsel employed against him, Mr. (afterwards Judge) Taunton, Landor adopted a more innocuous, if to himself at least as gratifying, mode of revenge. "I would not encounter the rudeness I experienced from this Taunton to save all the property I possess. I have, however, chastised him in my Latin verses now in the press." With reference to the criminal action pending on the part of the other and physically smarting man of law, he writes, "I shall be cited to take my trial at Monmouth; and as I certainly shall not appear, I shall be outlawed." In the meantime, his principal suit, for the recovery of nearly two thousand pounds due from Betham, had been successful, and his claim had been allowed by the Court of Exchequer to the last farthing. But it was too late. Ruin stared him in the face. He had sunk over seventy thou-

sand pounds upon the Llanthony property in five years, and he had no ready money to meet the interest due on a mortgage. There were other equally urgent claims. The pressure of these, together with the probable results of his resolution not to appear to answer the charge against him at Monmouth, determined him, in May, 1814, to retreat to the Continent. His personal property, both in Wales and at Bath, was sold. The estate of Llanthony was taken by arrangement out of his hands, and vested in those of trustees. The life-charge in favour of his mother entitled her, fortunately, to the position of first creditor. She had an excellent talent for business, as had one at least of her younger sons, and Llanthony, under the management of its new trustees, soon proved able to yield a handsome enough provision for Landor's maintenance after all charges upon it had been satisfied. His half-built mansion was pulled down, and its remains only exist to-day in the guise of a hay-shed; while in the adjoining dingle the stream is all but dried up, and silent, as if its Naiad had fled with her master, while all the rest are vocal. The property still belongs to Landor's surviving son. His roads, and a good part of his plantations, still exist to bear witness to the energy of his years of occupation, and the beautiful Welsh valley will be for ever associated with his fame.

Landor sent to Southey from Weymouth on the 27th of May, 1814, a letter dejected and almost desperate, although written with his unfailing dignity of manner, in which he speaks of his future as follows: "I go to-morrow to St. Malo. In what part of France I shall end my days I know not; but there I shall end them, and God grant that I may end them speedily, and so as to leave as little sorrow as possible to my friends. . . . My wife follows when I have found a place fit for her reception. Adieu."

But the cup of Landor's bitterness was not yet full. He sailed, in fact, not to St. Malo, but to Jersey, and was there joined by his wife and her young sister. Mrs. Landor disliked the plan of going to live in France, while Landor, on his part, was absolutely bent upon it. He desired that the question of changing their destination might not again be raised. She would not suffer the question to drop. Arguing one evening with more than usual petulance, she taunted him before her sister with their disparity of years. His pride took sudden fire; he rose at four the next morning, crossed the island on foot, and before noon was under weigh for the coast of France, in an oyster-boat, alone.

CHAPTER IV.

LIFE AT TOURS—COMO—PISA—IDYLLIA HEROICA.

[1814—1821.]

Up to the date which we have now reached Landor's career seems to present a spectacle of almost as much futility as force. His resplendent gifts and lofty purposes had been attended with little solid result, either in the practical or in the intellectual sphere. In the practical part of life he had, indeed, thus far conspicuously failed. The existence which he had realized for himself was one in which almost all his ideals were reversed. Bent upon walking in the paths of serenity, he had nevertheless trodden those of contention. Proudly exacting in his standard of intercourse and behaviour, he had been involved in ignominious wranglings with the base. Born to wealth, and eager to employ it for the public good, he had reaped nothing but frustration and embarrassment. Tenderly chivalrous towards women, he had just turned his back in anger upon his young wife. Neither in the other sphere of man's activity—the intellectual and imaginative sphere —which to him was, in truth, the more real and engrossing of the two, had Landor as yet done himself anything like full justice. Posterity, if his career had ended here, would probably have ignored his writings, or have remembered them at most as the fragmentary and imperfect products

of a powerful spirit that had passed away without having left any adequate memorial. Several years had still to elapse before Landor addressed himself to that which was destined to be his great and vital task in literature, the writing of the *Imaginary Conversations*. His life until then continued to be unsettled, and his efforts uncertainly directed.

He was not long in recovering from the effect of the misfortunes narrated in the last chapter. The relief of Latin verses came to the aid of his natural elasticity; and at Tours, whither he made his way from the coast of Brittany, we find him within a week or two busy upon the composition of a mythologic poem in that language—*Ulysses in Argiripa*—in the course of which the personages of some of his Welsh tormentors—Betham and his sister, and an Abergavenny attorney named Gabell—are ingeniously introduced and pilloried.[1] Of his quarrel with his wife he writes perfectly like a gentleman, doing justice to her contentment and moderation during the trying experiences of their life at Llanthony, proposing to hand over to her all his remaining fortune, reserving only 160*l.* a year for himself; but adding that every kind and tender sentiment towards her is rooted up from his heart for ever. When, however, he hears after a while that she has suffered no less than himself, and been very ill since their dispute, the news banishes all traces of resentment from his mind, and he writes at once "to comfort and console her." The result was for the time being a full reconciliation, and early in 1815 Mrs. Landor joined her husband at Tours. In the intervening months he had been living there alone, busying himself with his reading and his Latin verses; buying his own provisions in the market, and mak-

[1] *Ulysses in Argiripa*, lib. iii., vv. 197—209.

ing himself infinitely popular among the market-women by his genial, polite ways; on the best of terms also, strange to say, with the prefect; and occasionally receiving the visit of some choicer spirit among the English residents or tourists. It was there that he made the acquaintance, among others, of Francis Hare, an acquaintance destined to ripen into a friendship which proved one of the closest and most fruitful of Landor's life. Hare brought to see him at this time Mr., afterwards Sir Roderick, Murchison, in addressing whom in his old age Landor thus pleasantly recalls the circumstances:

> "Upon the bank
> Of Loire thou camest to me, brought by Hare,
> The witty and warm-hearted, passing through
> That shady garden whose broad tower ascends
> From chamber over chamber; there I dwelt,
> The flowers my guests, the birds my pensioners,
> Books my companions, and but few beside."

After the escape of Napoleon from Elba the English colony at Tours broke up in alarm; but Landor, on his part, wrote to Carnot, saying that he proposed to remain; received in answer a courteous assurance of protection; and, in fact, stayed unmolested at Tours throughout the Hundred Days. After the catastrophe of Waterloo he one day saw dismount, in the courtyard of the prefect's house, a traveller in whom he recognized, or at least always afterwards imagined that he had recognized, the fugitive Emperor himself.

France under the restored Bourbons had no charms for Landor. His wife and his brother Robert were now with him. The latter had a strong desire to visit Italy; Landor insisted that they should travel together; and in the month of September, 1815, "after contests with his land-

lady of the most tremendous description," they set off accordingly. They posted through France to Savoy, along a route beset on the right hand by the French forces, and on the left by the German army of occupation. An account of their journey is preserved in the letters written by Robert Landor to his mother—letters which betoken some measure both of chivalrous prejudice in favour of the pretty, reconciled, and now, as it would appear, somewhat ostentatiously meek and submissive sister-in-law, and of brotherly impatience with Walter's moods and caprices. When the travellers had made their way as far as Savoy, Landor found himself enchanted with the scenery of that province, and for a moment thought of fixing his abode at Chambery, but finally decided to push on into Italy. Before the end of the year he had arrived with his wife at Como, where he found himself disappointed and discontented at first, but where, after a time, he determined to settle down.

At Como Landor and his wife continued to live for the next three years. Before the summer of the third a boy was born to them, their first child, whom Landor christened Arnold Savage, after that Speaker of the House of Commons whom he conceived to be an ancestor of his own by the mother's side; other children, a girl and two more boys, followed within a few years. Landor delighted in the ways and company of children, and is the author of some of the most beautiful of all sayings about them. His own, as long as they were of tender age, were a source of extreme happiness to him; and their presence had for some years the effect of bringing peace at any rate, although no real concord, into his home relations. For the rest, in his life at Como as in his life at Llanthony, and indeed at all times, Landor was never so much taken up by anything as by his own reflexions; and no company was

so real to him as that with which he associated in imagination during his daily walks and nightly musings. In the way of practical contact with men during the period while he lived at Como there is not much to tell. Among his few visitors from abroad was "the learned and modest Bekker;" and he speaks of the "calm and philosophical Sironi" as his most frequent companion among the natives of the place. He had also some acquaintance in 1817 with an Englishman then resident near the lake, Sir Charles Wolseley, afterwards conspicuous as one of the leaders of the Birmingham reform agitation. They were both witnesses to the scandalous life led by the Princess of Wales in the villa on the lake where she was then residing; and Landor was, or imagined himself to be, subject to some insult or annoyance from those of her suite. "This alone," he wrote three years afterwards in his chivalrous way, when the same Sir Charles Wolseley brought forward his name as that of one in a position to give valuable evidence on her trial, "this alone, which might create and keep alive the most active resentment in others, would impose eternal silence on me." Of these and other matters Landor wrote frequently to Southey, whom he also kept supplied with presents of books, collected chiefly in the course of excursions to Milan. On his own account Landor was never much of a book collector, or rather he never kept many of the books he bought, but mastered, meditated, and then gave them away. It was always a matter of remark how disproportionate was the extent of his library to that of his reading. In the summer of 1817 Landor received a visit at Como from Southey in person. "Well do I remember," he makes Southey say in one of his subsequent *Imaginary Conversations*—"well do I remember our long conversations in the silent and solitary

church of Sant' Abondio (surely the coolest spot in Italy), and how often I turned back my head towards the open door, fearing lest some pious passer-by, or some more distant one in the wood above, pursuing the pathway that leads to the tower of Luitprand, should hear the roof echo with your laughter at the stories you had collected about the brotherhood and sisterhood of the place."

But Southey's spirits were on this occasion not what they had been in the old Llanthony days. He had lost his son Herbert, the darling of his heart, twelve months before, and had since suffered extreme vexation from the attacks and the rebuffs which he had undergone in connexion with the piratical publication of his *Wat Tyler*.

> "Grief had swept over him; days darken'd round:
> Bellagio, Valintelvi, smiled in vain,
> And Monte Rosa from Helvetia far
> Advanced to meet us, mild in majesty
> Above the glittering crests of giant sons
> Station'd around . . . in vain too! all in vain."

Landor's stay at Como was brought to a characteristic termination in the autumn of 1818. An Italian poet, Monti, had written some disparaging verses against England. Landor instantly retorted with his old school-boy weapons, and printed some opprobrious Latin verses on Monti, who summoned him before the local courts on a charge of libel. Thereupon he wrote to threaten the magistrate with a thrashing. For this he was ordered to quit the country. The time allowed him expired on the 19th of September. "I remained a week longer, rather wishing to be sent for to Milan." No such result ensuing, he retreated in a stately manner on the 28th, discharging more Latin verses as he went, this time against the Austrian Governor, Count Strasoldo. The next two months he

spent in a villa rented from the Marchese Pallavacini, at Albaro, near Genoa. Before the close of the year he had gone on with his family to Pisa.

At Pisa, with the exception of one summer, the first after his arrival, which he spent at Pistoia, Landor remained until September, 1821. It is a singular accident in the history of the famous little Tuscan city, that it should have been chosen by three of the most illustrious of modern Englishmen for their abode almost at the same time. Shelley established himself there in January, 1820, a year later than Landor; Byron in October, 1821, a month after Landor had left. With neither of these brother poets had Landor any personal acquaintance. The current slanders against Shelley's character, especially in connexion with the tragic issue of his first marriage, had been repeated to Landor by Mackintosh in a form which prevented him from seeking the younger poet's acquaintance, or even accepting it when it was offered, while they were both at Pisa. This Landor afterwards bitterly regretted. He had the heartiest admiration for Shelley's poetry, and learned, when it was too late, to admire his character no less. We cannot doubt that the two would have understood each other if they had met, and that between Landor, the loftiest and most massive spirit of his age, and Shelley, the most beautiful and ardent, there would have sprung up relations full of pleasure for themselves and of interest for posterity. For Byron, on the other hand, Landor had little admiration and less esteem. He had gone out of his way to avoid meeting him once in England. Neither is it certain that personal intercourse would have led to an improved understanding between them. Landor's fastidious breeding might easily have taken umbrage at the strain of vulgarity there was in By-

ron; his pride at the other's trick of assumption; his sincerity at the other's affectations; especially if Byron had chosen to show, as he often did show with new acquaintances, his worst side first. And circumstances soon arose which would have made friendly intercourse between them harder than ever.

But before coming to these, it is necessary to fix in our minds the true nature of Landor's position, intellectual and personal, towards the two opposite parties into which the chief creative forces of English literature were at this time divided. One of these was a party of conservation and conformity, the other of expansion and revolt. To the conservative camp belonged the converted Jacobins, Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge, and, starting from a different point of departure, Scott; while the men of revolution were first of all Byron, now in the full blaze of his notoriety and his fame, and Shelley, whose name and writings were still comparatively unknown. The work of all creative spirits tends in the long-run towards expansion; towards the enrichment of human lives and the enlargement of human ideals. Wordsworth by his revelation of the living affinities between man and nature, and of the dignity of simple joys and passions, Coleridge by introducing into the inert mass of English orthodoxy and literalism the leaven of German transcendental speculation, Scott by kindling the dormant sympathy of the modern mind with past ages, lives, and customs, were perhaps each in his way doing as much to enrich the lives and enlarge the ideas of men as either Shelley, with his auroral visions of an emancipated future for the race, or Byron with his dazzling illustration of the principle of rebellion in his own person. But so far as contains the religious, political, and social forms surrounding them, the creative spirits,

with the exception of a few who, like Keats, stand apart, "and simply sing the most heart-easing things," divide themselves, like other men, into two parties, one seeing nothing keenly but the good, and the other nothing keenly but the evil, in what is—one fearing all, and the other hoping all, from change. The natural position of Landor was midway between the two. On the one hand, he was incapable of such parochial rusticity and narrowness as marked the judgments of Wordsworth in matters lying outside the peculiar kindling power of his genius; or of such vague, metaphysical reconciliations between the existing and the ideal as contented Coleridge; or of Southey's blind antagonism to change; or of Scott's romantic partiality for feudal and kingly forms and usages. But, on the other hand, Landor saw human nature not in the ethereal, disembodied, iridescent semblance which it bore to the imagination of Shelley, but in its practical attributes of flesh and blood, and his watchwords by no means included, like those of the younger poet, the universal indignant rejection of all hereditary beliefs and bondages together. Neither did Landor, in sharing Byron's hatred of political tyranny and contempt for conventional judgments, indulge in anything like Byron's clamorous parade or cynic recklessness, but upheld and cherished whatever was really respectable in respectability, and maintained inviolate his antique principle of decorum even in rebellion. In spite of the turbulent reputation he had earned by his various collisions with authority, Landor regarded himself, to use his own words, as "radically a conservative in everything useful." In the matter of religious belief and practice he is commonly spoken of as a pagan, but his habits of thought were rather what are now-a-days termed positive; that is to say, he held the ultimate mysteries of the

universe insoluble either by theology or philosophy, and estimated creeds and doctrines simply according to their effect on human happiness.

"Divinity is little worth having, much less paying for, unless she teaches humanity. The use of religion on earth is to inculcate the moral law; in other words, in the words of Jesus Christ, to love our neighbour as ourselves."

And again, in setting practical over doctrinal religion:

"Christianity, as I understand it, lies not in belief but in action. That servant is a good servant who obeys the just orders of his master; not he who repeats his words, measures his stature, or traces his pedigree."

Accepting Christianity in this sense, Landor was never tired of enforcing the contrast between the practical religion of the gospels and the official and doctrinal religion of priests and kings. In like manner as regards philosophy; for abstract and metaphysical speculations he had no sympathy, scarcely even any toleration.

"The business of philosophy is to examine and estimate all those things which come within the cognizance of the understanding. Speculations on any that lie beyond are only pleasant dreams, leaving the mind to the lassitude of disappointment. They are easier than geometry and dialectics; they are easier than the efforts of a well-regulated imagination in the structure of a poem."

To the same purport, Diogenes is made to reply to Plato:

"I meddle not at present with infinity or eternity; when I can comprehend them, I will talk about them. You metaphysicians kill the flower-bearing and fruit-bearing glebe with delving, and turning over, and sifting, and never bring up any solid and malleable mass from the dark profundity in which you labour. The intellectual world, like the physical, is inapplicable to profit and incapable of cultivation a little way below the surface."

Neither could Landor admit that philosophy, even in the sense above defined, that is philosophy dealing with the facts of life and experience, could be profitably pursued apart from directly practical issues. Human welfare, and not abstract truth, should be its aim.

"This is philosophy, to make remote things tangible, common things extensively useful, useful things extensively common, and to leave the least necessary for the last. . . . Truth is not reasonably the main and ultimate object of philosophy; philosophy should seek truth merely as the means of acquiring and propagating happiness."

In politics Landor was by no means the mere rebel which a saying of Carlyle's, repeated by Emerson, has tended to represent him. He was, indeed, the staunchest friend of liberty—understanding by liberty the right of every human being "to enjoy his reason for the promotion of his happiness"—and the most untiring enemy of all forms of despotism, usurpation, persecution, or corruption which in his view interfered with that right. Beyond this, he was far from being in any general sense a political innovator or leveller. With democracy he had no sympathy, regarding that majority of all ranks, whom he called "the vulgar," as of infinitely less importance in a commonwealth than its two or three great men. "A mob," he says, "is not worth a man." Accordingly, he was no great believer in popular suffrage, and would on no account condescend to personal contact with its processes and instruments. He prided himself on never having made use of the votes which he possessed in four counties, or entered a club, or been present at a political meeting. Revolutionist as he was in regard to the despotic governments of the continent, convinced as he always continued to be of the schoolboy doctrine of the virtue of tyrannicide, he

advocated no very sweeping reforms in the politics of his native country. He would "change little, but correct much." He believed greatly in the high qualities of his own order, the untitled gentry of England, and was fond of scheming such a reform of the peerage as should convert that body from a more or less corrupt and degenerate oligarchy into a genuine aristocracy of worth and talent. He was, as we have seen, a great denouncer of what he thought the trucklings, derogations, and quackeries of ordinary political practice and partisanship; but his chief practical exhortations were against wars of conquest and annexation; against alliance with the despotic powers for the suppression of insurgent nationalities; against the over-endowment of ecclesiastical dignitaries; in favour of the removal of Catholic disabilities; in favour of factory acts, of the mitigation of the penal laws, and of ecclesiastical and agrarian legislation for the relief of the Irish.

If Landor by his general opinions thus stood midway between the conservative and revolutionary groups of his contemporaries, we have seen already on which side of the two his literary sympathies were engaged. He belonged to the generation of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and Charles Lamb, and had grown up in admiration of the writings of the so-called Lake school for years before their light was dimmed by the younger star of Byron. At the same time, Landor was essentially the reverse of a partisan; his literary judgments were perfectly open, and he was nobly eager to acknowledge merit whenever he could perceive it. If he can be charged with partisanship in any instance, it is in that of Southey, whom he placed as a poet not only far above his young antagonist Byron, but above Wordsworth also. For this mistake, Landor's loyal and devoted friendship is undoubtedly in part re-

sponsible. As between Southey and Byron, however, we must remember that the excellencies of the one and the faults of the other were precisely of the kind most calculated to impress Landor. He looked in literature first of all to the technical points of form and workmanship. Southey was one of the soundest and most scrupulous of workmen; Byron one of the most impetuous and lax; and considering how rarely poets have ever judged aright of each other, how hard it is for any man ever to judge aright of a contemporary, we shall not too much wonder if Landor failed to see that the skilful, versatile, level, industrious poetry of Southey contained nothing which would strongly interest a second generation, while that of the other, with its glaring faults, its felicities that seem so casual even when they are most irresistible, its headlong current over rough and smooth, was the utterance of a personality that would impress and fascinate posterity to the latest day.

All these relations of Landor to his contemporaries come into the light in the course of his correspondence and his work at Pisa. His intercourse with Southey, in the shape of letters and consignments of books, is as close as ever. We find him also in correspondence with Wordsworth himself, on terms of great mutual respect and courtesy. On the literary controversies of the hour Landor printed some just and striking observations, although in a form which prevented them from making any impression on the public mind, in a book published at Pisa in 1820. This was the volume called *Idyllia Heroica*, containing the carefully matured fruits of all his Latin studies and exercises during many years past. The earlier Oxford edition, printed, as we have seen, about the time Landor was leaving Llanthony, had contained, besides other mis-

cellaneous matter, five heroic tales or idyls in hexameter verse; this Pisa edition contains ten, most of which Landor afterwards turned into English for his volume entitled *Hellenics*, and upwards of fifty sets of hendecasyllabics. Like all the really original writing of the moderns in this language, Landor's Latin poems are not easy reading. His style is completely personal, as indeed we should expect from a scholar who used Latin often by preference for the expression of his most intimate thoughts and feelings; it does not recall the diction or cadences of any given master; it is not perfectly free from grammatical and prosodial slips; but it is remarkably spontaneous, energetic, and alive. The volume concludes with a long critical essay, developed from the *Quæstiuncula* of 1803, on the cultivation and use of Latin—*De cultu atque usu Latini sermonis.*

This essay contains much that would, if Landor had only written it in his noble English instead of his only less noble Latin, have counted among his most interesting work. He has written, he says, because too much leisure is prejudicial alike to virtue and to happiness; and he has published his work in Italy because he desires to avoid being confounded by those among whom he is sojourning with the promiscuous crowd of travelling Englishmen (*quia nolui* turmalis *esse, nolui opinione hominum cum cæteris Britannorum peregrinantium, cujuscumque sint ordinis, conturbari*). His avowed purpose is the paradoxical one of pleading for the Latin language as that proper to be used by all civilized nations for the expression of their most dignified and durable thoughts. Why should those be called the dead languages which alone will never die? Why should any one choose to engrave on glass when it is open to him to engrave on beryl-stone? What literary

pleasure can be so great to a man as that of composing in the language of his earliest and most fruitful lessons? English, even English, may decay, for there are signs abroad of the decadence of England's polity, and that of her language cannot fail to follow; but Latin has survived and will continue to survive all the vicissitudes of time. And much more to the same effect; to which is added a condensed critical narrative of the history of Latin poetry since the Renaissance, bespeaking a prodigious familiarity with a literature to most people neither familiar nor interesting. This is interspersed with criticisms, in like manner succinct and authoritative, on the principal poets of ancient Rome, and with many searching observations, both general and analytic, on the poets and poetry of England. Landor has also his fling at France, remarking how the once vaunted *Henriade* of Voltaire has sunk to the level of a lesson-book for teaching heroic metre—and heroic patience—to the young; but contrasting, on the other hand, the treatment of poets in France, where every man takes to himself a share of their glory, with their treatment in England, where no man will tolerate any poetic glory except his own. In the course of the discussion Landor finds occasion for several of his striking sentences—as this, that every great poet is in some sort the creator of that man who appreciates the delights of the Paradise prepared by him (*magnus poeta quisque creator hominis istius qui, liceat ita dicere, Paradiso suo fruatur*).

With reference to the English writers of his own day, Landor has a fine and, on the whole, a just outburst against the Broughams, Jeffreys, and their meaner rivals or satellites in the trade of criticism as then practised; followed by an apostrophe to Wordsworth—"admirable man, citizen, philosopher, poet!"—whom neither seclusion, nor

dignity of life, nor the common reverence of men, has been able to protect from the virulence of these enemies of all good men and writers. And yet, if only he had been dead before they were born, these same traducers would have been the foremost to bring their incense to his tomb. Coming to Byron, Landor begins with the saying that the greatest poets have in all times been good men, and there is no worse mistake than to suppose vice the natural concomitant of genius. But most men prefer the second-best to the best; and when there appears a writer of talent and fertility, whose life and style are alike full of showy faults, he is sure of notoriety and acclamation. The true advice for him is to mend his morals, to be more careful of his style, to control the ardours of his temperament, to rush less hastily into print, and then by the time he is forty he may well produce something epical and truly great (*ingens nescio quid et vere epicum*). The passage is far from being either unkind or unjust. Southey in the next year quoted it, adding words expressive of his enthusiastic regard and admiration for its author, in a note to the preface of his *Vision of Judgment.* This is the preface in which Southey made his famous attack upon Byron and the "Satanic school;" an attack which, with the inconceivably unlucky performance which followed it in the shape of an apotheosis of George III. in lumbering and lame hexameters, gave Byron, who, as he said, "liked a row," an opportunity too good to be lost. We all know the consequences. If Southey's attack is remembered, it is because of Byron's never-to-be-forgotten retort. I speak not of the prose correspondence, in which Byron with his sneers and his unfairness makes no such honourable figure as his injudicious but sincerely indignant and perfectly loyal antagonist, but of Byron's own

poetic, mocking, and immortal *Vision*. In a note to this Byron dealt a passing thrust at the laureate's incongruous friend Savagius, or Savage Landor—"such is his grim cognomen"—"who cultivates much private renown in the shape of Latin verses," and whose opinion of his late sovereign was so strikingly at variance with that of his friend. Byron next returned to the charge against Landor in a note to *The Island*. Having in this poem avowedly paraphrased Landor's lines upon a sea-shell in *Gebir*, which he had heard Shelley recite, Byron takes occasion to declare that he has never read the poem, and to quote Gifford's opinion that the rest of it is "trash of the worst and most insane description." Then again there are the well-known lines in Don Juan—

> "And that deep-mouthed Beotian Savage Landor
> Has taken for a swan rogue Southey's gander."

"Deep-mouthed" is good; and in all this there was much more mischief than malice on Byron's part. His account of his real feelings towards Landor is extant, in the diluted report of Lady Blessington, as follows:

> "At Pisa a friend told me that Walter Savage Landor had declared he either would not or could not read my works. I asked my officious friend if he was sure which it was that Landor said, as the *would not* was not offensive, and the *could not* was highly so. After some reflection, he, of course *en ami*, chose the most disagreeable signification; and I marked down Landor in the tablet of memory as a person to whom a *coup-de-patte* must be given in my forthcoming work, though he really is a man whose brilliant talents and profound erudition I cannot help admiring as much as I respect his character."

Landor's retort to the Byronic *coups-de-patte* appeared presently in the shape of an apologue, in one of his *Conversations*, where the personage of Byron is shadowed

forth under that of Mr. George Nelly, an imaginary son of Lord Rochester's:

"Whenever he wrote a bad poem, he supported his sinking fame by some signal act of profligacy, an elegy by a seduction, an heroic by an adultery, a tragedy by a divorce. On the remark of a learned man, that irregularity is no indication of genius, he began to lose ground rapidly, when on a sudden he cried out at the Haymarket, *There is no God.* It was then surmised more generally and more gravely that there was something in him, and he stood upon his legs almost to the last. *Say what you will*, once whispered a friend of mine, *there are things in him strong as poison, and original as sin.*"

The subjects discussed in Landor's Latin essay had been literary alone. But other things besides literature occupied his thoughts in these years at Pisa. In 1819 and the following years began the first stirrings of those political movements which are not ended yet—the first uprisings, after the settlement of 1815, of the spirit of liberty and nationality against dynasties and despotisms. The Spanish republics of South America had struck for freedom against the mother country; the Spaniards themselves next rose against their king, the restored and perjured Ferdinand; the flame spread to Italy, where the flag of revolt was raised against the Bourbons in Naples and the Austrians in Lombardy, and to Greece, where peasant and brigand, trader and pirate, women and children, young and old, on a sudden astonished the world with deeds of desperate and successful heroism against the Turk. All these movements Landor followed with passionate sympathy, and with corresponding detestation the measures of the Holy Alliance for their repression, the deliberations of the Congress of Verona, and the French invasion of Spain. Canning's tentative and half-hearted efforts in the cause of liberty he condemned scarcely less than the des-

potic predilections of Castlereagh. He would have had England strike everywhere for the oppressed against the oppressor. His own Spanish title and decoration Landor had indignantly sent back on the violation by Ferdinand of his Charter. He now (1821) addressed to the people of Italy an essay or oration on representative government, written in their own language, which he by this time wrote and spoke with freedom, though his speaking accent was strongly English to the last. From these years date many of the thoughts and feelings to which he gave expression during those next ensuing in his political dialogues.

Poems like Shelley's *Hellas* and his *Ode to Naples* have their counterpart in the work of Landor, in two pieces inspired at this time by the European, and especially the Greek, revolution. One is addressed *to Corinth;* the other is called *Regeneration;* both illustrate the noblest altitudes —and, at the same time, it must be said, the curious baldnesses and depressions—of which Landor's poetic thought and poetic style were capable. I quote the best part of the second. The reference towards the end is to the destruction of the Turkish fleet by Canaris with his two fireships and handful of men:

> "We are what suns and winds and waters make us;
> The mountains are our sponsors, and the rills
> Fashion and win their nursling with their smiles.
> But where the land is dim from tyranny,
> There tiny pleasures occupy the place
> Of glories and of duties; as the feet
> Of fabled faeries when the sun goes down
> Trip o'er the grass where wrestlers strove by day.
> Then Justice, call'd the Eternal One above,
> Is more inconstant than the buoyant form
> That bursts into existence from the froth
> Of ever-varying ocean: what is best

Then becomes worst; what loveliest, most deform'd.
The heart is hardest in the softest climes,
The passions flourish, the affections die.
O thou vast tablet of these awful truths
That fillest all the space between the seas,
Spreading from Venice's deserted courts
To the Tarentine and Hydruntine mole,
What lifts thee up? what shakes thee? 'tis the breath
Of God. Awake, ye nations! spring to life!
Let the last work of his right hand appear
Fresh with his image, Man. Thou recreant slave
That sittest afar off and helpest not,
O thou degenerate Albion! with what shame
Do I survey thee, pushing forth the spunge
At thy spear's length, in mocking at the thirst
Of holy Freedom in his agony,
And prompt and keen to pierce the wounded side.
Must Italy then wholly rot away
Amid her slime, before she germinate
Into fresh vigour, into form again?
What thunder bursts upon mine ear? some isle
Hath surely risen from the gulphs profound,
Eager to suck the sunshine from the breast
Of beauteous Nature, and to catch the gale
From golden Hermus and Melena's brow.
A greater thing than isle, than continent,
Than earth itself, than ocean circling earth,
Hath risen there; regenerate Man hath risen.
Generous old bard of Chios! not that Jove
Deprived thee in thy latter days of sight
Would I complain, but that no higher theme
Than a disdainful youth, a lawless king,
A pestilence, a pyre, awoke thy song,
When on the Chian coast, one javelin's throw
From where thy tombstone, where thy cradle stood,
Twice twenty self-devoted Greeks assail'd
The naval host of Asia, at one blow
Scattered it into air . . . and Greece was free . . .
And ere these glories beam'd, thy day had closed.

Let all that Elis ever saw give way,
All that Olympian Jove e'er smiled upon:
The Marathonian columns never told
A tale more glorious, never Salamis,
Nor, faithful in the centre of the false,
Platea, nor Anthela, from whose mount
Benignant Ceres wards the blessed Laws,
And sees the Amphictyon dip his weary foot
In the warm streamlet of the straits below."

CHAPTER V.

LIFE AT FLORENCE — THE IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS.

[1821—1829.]

Both in telling of Landor's literary collisions with Byron, and in tracing the course of his sympathies with the insurgent populations of Southern Europe, we have been led beyond the strict limits of his stay at Pisa. He left that city in September, 1821; and left it, strange to say, at peace, having had only one slight brush with authority, and that only with the censorship of the press, concerning a line in one of his Latin poems. He went next to Florence, where he established himself with his family in a handsome suite of apartments in the Medici palace. Here he lived for five years, and for the three following principally in a country house, the Villa Castiglione, distant half an hour's walk from the same city.

During these eight years Landor was engaged, to the exclusion of nearly all other work, with the production of his *Imaginary Conversations*. The experimental part of his literary career had now ended, and the period of solid and confident production had begun. He had found the form and mode of expression that best suited his genius. The idea of writing prose dialogues or conversations between illustrious personages of the past was no new one in his mind. In the days of his connexion with Whig jour-

nalism, twenty years before, he had offered to Adair for insertion in the *Morning Chronicle* a dialogue between Burke and Grenville, which had been declined. He had about the same time written another between Henry IV. and Arnold Savage. After that he had never regularly resumed this form of composition until towards the date of his departure from Pisa. But it was a form congenial to every habit of his mind. The greatness of great characters was what most impressed him in the world. Their exploits and sufferings, their potencies of intellect and will, the operation of their influence and example, were for him the essence of history. He could not bring himself to regard statistical or social facts, or the working of collective or impersonal forces in human affairs, as deserving from the historian any commensurate degree of attention with the lives and achievements of individuals. In this temper of hero-worship Landor was a true disciple of antiquity, and he regarded the whole field of history from the ancient point of view. The extraordinary range and thoroughness of his reading made him familiar with all the leading figures of Time. His dramatic instinct prompted him to reanimate them in thought with the features and the accents of life. It was in converse with these mute companions that he was accustomed to spend the best part of his days and nights. "Even those with whom I have not lived, and whom, indeed, I have never seen, affect me by sympathy as if I had known them intimately, and I hold with them in my walks many imaginary conversations." Elsewhere Landor adorns and amplifies in his choicest vein this account of his own habits, in order to transfer it to the lips of Petrarch. "When I was younger I was fond of wandering in solitary places, and never was afraid of slumbering in woods and grottoes. Among the chief pleasures of my

life, and among the commonest of my occupations, was the bringing before me such heroes and heroines of antiquity, such poets and sages, such of the prosperous and the unfortunate, as most interested me by their courage, their eloquence, or their adventures. Engaging them in the conversations best suited to their characters, I knew perfectly their manners, their steps, their voices: and often did I moisten with my tears the models I had been forming of the less happy."

If it was thus an essential habit of Landor's mind to think about persons, and dramatically, to think in fragments, and disconnectedly, was not less so. In his mental communion with the heroes and heroines of the past, he began by framing for them isolated thoughts and sentences, led them on next to an interchange of several, and added more by degrees until the whole scene was filled out. He confesses as much himself, in a metaphor which is characteristic also of his tastes as a lover of trees and planting. "I confess to you that a few detached thoughts and images have always been the beginnings of my works. Narrow slips have risen up, more or fewer, above the surface. These gradually became larger and more consolidated; freshness and verdure first covered one part, then another; then plants of firmer and higher growth, however scantily, took their places, then extended their roots and branches; and among them, and around about them, in a little while you yourself, and as many more as I desired, found places for study and recreation." Dialogue is a form of literature in which all these peculiarities could find play, not only without impediment but with advantage. Accordingly, Landor was himself astonished at the abundance and the satisfaction with which he found himself pouring out his intellectual stores in this form when

he had once begun. He was moved to do so partly by the correspondence of Southey, who was full at this time of a projected book of *Colloquies* of his own, and partly by the conversation and encouragement of Francis Hare. Landor had no idea at the outset how far his new literary enterprise was destined to carry him. He still meditated, as the great work of his life, a history to be written either in co-operation with Southey or separately. This idea of working in conjunction with Southey, long and seriously entertained by Landor, is a signal proof, coming from a mind so rooted in independence and self-sufficiency as his, of his unbounded and deferential regard for his friend. The idea was gradually and naturally dropped somewhat later, and Landor conceived instead that of writing by himself, in the form of a series of letters, a systematic commentary on the history of England from the year 1775. In the meantime he laboured impetuously at his dialogues. He had before him the examples of many illustrious writers in all ages; of Plato, Xenophon, and Lucian, of Cicero and Boethius, of Erasmus and More; and, among English authors of comparatively recent date, those of Langhorne, Lyttelton, and Hurd. It is needless to say that he did not closely follow, much less imitate, any of his predecessors. He was not at first sure of the method to be adopted, and began by planning set conversations on particular texts and topics. This was soon given up, and he wrote according to the choice or the preoccupation of the moment. For fear of being at any time caught echoing either the matter or the manner of any other writer, he used to abstain altogether from reading before he himself began to compose, "lest the theme should haunt me, and some of the ideas take the liberty of playing with mine. I do not wish the

children of my brain to imitate the gait or learn any tricks of others." By the 9th of March, 1822, he had finished fifteen dialogues, and burnt two others which had failed to satisfy him. The manuscript of the fifteen he consigned not many days later by a private hand to Longmans, to whom he at the same time addressed his proposals for their publication.

The parcel was delayed in delivery, and no answer reached Landor for more than three months. Long before that his impatience had risen to boiling-point. He rushed headlong to the direst conclusions. Of course the manuscript had been lost; or of course it had been refused; or both; and it was just like his invariable ill-fortune. He was in despair. He took to his bed. He swore he would never write another line, and burnt what he had got by him already written. "This disappointment has brought back my old bilious complaint, together with the sad reflection on that fatality which has followed me through life, of doing everything in vain. I have, however, had the resolution to tear in pieces all my sketches and projects, and to forswear all future undertakings. I try to sleep away my time, and pass two-thirds of the twenty-four hours in bed. I may speak of myself as of a dead man. I will say, then, that these *Conversations* contained as forcible writing as exists on earth."

This was early in June, and it was not until the end of August that news of the manuscript at last arrived. In the meantime Landor had recovered his equanimity, and was busy writing new dialogues and making additions to the old. Longmans, in fact, refused the book. A whole succession of other publishers to whom it was offered either refused it also, or else offered terms which were unacceptable. By this time, however, Landor was again too

deeply engrossed with the work of writing to bestow much attention or indignation upon such impediments. He had now put everything concerned with the publication into the hands of Julius Hare, to whom he was as yet known only through his brother Francis, but who eagerly undertook and loyally discharged the task. Hare, then a tutor at Trinity College, Cambridge, persuaded a publisher named Taylor, with whom he was on terms of personal friendship, to take up the book; the profits or losses, if any, to be shared equally between author and publisher. Presently there arose differences between Taylor and Hare about the suppression of words or passages which the former judged exceptionable. First Wordsworth, then Southey, was proposed as umpire in these differences, Southey finally agreeing to undertake the office; but even against Southey Taylor adhered to some of his objections. All this occasioned considerable delay. In the meantime the rumour of the forthcoming book aroused no slight degree of expectation. As a foretaste of its contents, the critical dialogue between Southey and Porson on the merits of Wordsworth's poetry was published by agreement in one of the monthly reviews in 1823. The best judges were interested and struck, and Wordsworth himself much gratified. Landor's original intention had been to dedicate his book to Wordsworth, and his announcement of the fact had been received by the poet with the utmost pleasure. But while the volumes were in the press it seemed to Landor that some of his expressions against those in authority were stronger than could be pleasing to one of Wordsworth's opinions; so, with courteous explanations, he changed his purpose; and when the book at last appeared, in 1824, its two volumes were dedicated respectively, the first to the husband of his wife's sister, Major-

General Stopford: the second to a soldier of liberty, General Mina, the champion of the popular cause in Spain. In the course of a preface prefixed to the first volume Landor describes his present purposes in literature as follows: "Should health and peace of mind remain to me, and the enjoyment of a country where, if there are none to assist, at least there is none to molest me, I hope to leave behind me completed the great object of my studies, an orderly and solid work in history; and I cherish the persuasion that Posterity will not confound me with the Coxes and Foxes of the age."

In the two volumes thus produced and prefaced, dialogues the most dissimilar in subject, and the most various in the personages introduced, are brought together without system or connexion. Lord Brooke and Sir Philip Sidney discourse on letters and morality beneath the oaks of Penshurst. Richard I. encounters his faithful Abbot of Boxley on the road by Hagenau. Southey recites to Porson the *Laodamia* of Wordsworth, and they criticize its beauties and shortcomings. Æschines and Phocion discuss the character of Demosthenes and the prospects of Greece on one page, and on the next Queen Elizabeth banters Cecil on his slight esteem for poetry and poets. General Kleber opens the locket and the letter taken from the body of an English officer killed in wantonness by the French during the war in Egypt. Demosthenes discusses policy and oratory with his teacher Eubulides, and Buonaparte receives the adulations of the Senate through its president. Milton converses with Andrew Marvel on the forms and varieties of comedy and tragedy, and Washington with Franklin on the causes and conduct of the war between the American colonies and the mother country, and on the political prospects of each

in the future. Roger Ascham warns his lovely pupil, Lady Jane Grey, of the perils that await her after her marriage. The wisdom of Bacon and of Hooker are exhibited together, and the worldliness of the one set in contrast to the piety of the other. The extravagances of despotism and of superstition are set forth in a vein of Aristophanic caricature in a conversation of Louis XIV. with his confessor. Pericles and Sophocles walk and talk amid the new-limned and new-carven glories of the Acropolis. The prospects of revolutionary Spain and revolutionary Greece, and the duties of the European powers to both, are discussed in a dialogue of General Lacy with the Cura Merino, and another of Prince Mavrocordato with Colocotroni. The Scotch philosopher and the Scotch poet, Hume and Home, converse of their own problematic relationship, of orthodoxy, and of toleration. Henry VIII. intrudes suddenly upon his cast-off wife, Anne Boleyn, in the days just before her execution. Cicero moralizes with his brother Quinctus concerning life, death, friendship, and glory, on the eve of his last birthday. The seditious Tooke wins from the Tory Johnson a kindly hearing for his views on English language and orthography—views which in fact are Landor's own, and the effect of which makes itself practically perceived in the spelling both of this and of his other published writings, earlier and later. In his own person Landor appears as interlocutor in two dialogues: one principally on architecture and gardening, held with his landlord at Genoa; the other on poetry, criticism, and Boileau with the French translator of Milton, the Abbé Delille. Interspersed are supplementary notes and dissertations in Landor's customary vein of mingled whim and wisdom, of ardent enthusiasm and lofty scorn, all conveyed in the same dignified, sedate, authoritative tones.

Finally, "as a voluntary to close the work," he appends the poem on the Greek and Italian revolutions of which we have quoted a part above.

The book made when it appeared no great impression on the popular mind, but upon that of students and lovers of high literature one as strong, at least, as Landor's friends expected. He could no longer be charged with cultivating private renown among a select band of admirers. He had challenged the general verdict over an extensive field of thought and imagination. The verdict of the critics, in that age of carping and cudgelling literary partisanship, could not be expected to be unanimous, least of all in the case of a writer of judgments so decisive and opinions so untempered as Landor. Jeffrey only allowed Hazlitt to notice the book in the *Edinburgh Review* when he had ascertained that the enthusiastic opinion which Hazlitt had formed of Landor's powers of mind and style, and of the beauty of particular dialogues, was qualified by strong disapproval of many of his opinions, especially of his opinions on Buonaparte; and even then Jeffrey cut and modified his contributor's work, so that the article as it appeared was of a very mixed character. The *Quarterly*, as a matter of course, was hostile; but the sting had been taken out of Quarterly hostility by a dexterous stroke of friendship on the part of Julius Hare. This was a criticism which Hare published in the *London Review* just before the appearance of the *Quarterly*, and in which he anticipated all the reprehensions of the Tory oracle, putting them into the mouth of an imaginary interlocutor whom he calls Hargreaves, and represents as a cynical, scribbling barrister, and himself traversing and over-riding them. From Southey and Wordsworth there came, written on a single sheet, a letter of thanks and praise which Landor

greatly cherished. It was felt and said, among those who have the right to speak for futurity, that a new classic had arisen. One thing, at any rate, there was no gainsaying, and that was the excellence of Landor's English, the strength, dignity, and harmony of his prose style, qualities in which he was obviously without a living rival. For the first time Landor was able to anticipate a certain measure of profit from his work. Both to profit and popularity, indeed, he was accustomed to express an indifference which was quite sincere: but the encouragement of his peers added a real zest to the continuance of his labours. Almost before the first edition had appeared, he had prepared materials for its expansion in a second, to consist of three volumes instead of two. He kept forwarding corrections and insertions for the original dialogues, the latter including some of the best matter which they contain in the form which we now possess. Thus to the dialogue of the Ciceros he added the allegory of Truth, the most perfect, I think, next to one (and that also is by Landor), in the English language: to that of Lacy and Merino, the grandest of all his outbursts concerning the principles of English policy abroad: and even to the brief, high-pitched, and high-wrought dialogues of Lady Jane Grey and Anne Boleyn, a page or two each. To the passage on Mr. George Nelly the death of Byron, which had happened about the time of its original publication, induces Landor to append this noble palinode:

"If, before the dialogue was printed, he had performed those services to Greece which will render his name illustrious to eternity, those by which he merited such funereal honours as, in the parsimony of praise, knowing its value in republics, she hardly would have decreed to the most deserving of her heroes: if, I repeat it, he had performed those services, the performance of which I envy him from

my soul, and as much as any other does the gifts of heaven he threw away so carelessly, never would I, from whatever provocation, have written a syllable against him. I had avoided him; I had slighted him; he knew it. He did not love me; he could not. While he spoke or wrote against me, I said nothing in print or conversation; the taciturnity of pride gave way to other feelings when my friends, men so much better and (let the sincerity of the expression be questioned by those who are unacquainted with us) so much dearer, so much oftener in my thoughts, were assailed by him too intemperately."

Landor's materials for his third volume comprised no less than twenty dialogues, including one very long, rambling, and heterogeneous, between the Duc de Richelieu, a vulgar Irish woman of title, a general, also Irish, and a virtuous English schoolmaster turned sailor. With this were associated some of Landor's best brief dialogues of character and passion, notably the Roman two of Marcellus with Hannibal and Tiberius with Vipsania; several of his monumental satires against tyranny and superstition, including the terrible dialogue of Peter the Great with his son Alexis, and the playful one of Bossuet and the Duchesse de Fontanges; a discussion between Rousseau and Malesherbes, which is one of the best of the modern meditative class; a visit of Joseph Scaliger to Montaigne, the latter a personage for whom Landor entertained a peculiar sympathy and admiration; and among the ancients a remonstrance of the poet Anacreon with the tyrant Polycrates, a contrast of the true stoic Epictetus with the false stoic Seneca, and a second conversation of Demosthenes and Eubulides. Himself Landor introduced as conversing with an English and a Florentine visitor on the death and the virtues of the Grand Duke Ferdinand of Tuscany, on politics and poetry, and especially on the fates and genius of Keats and Shelley.

"If anything could engage me to visit Rome again, to endure the sight of her scarred and awful ruins, telling their stories on the ground in the midst of bell-ringers and pantomimes; if I could let charnel-houses and opera-houses, consuls and popes, tribunes and cardinals, senatorial orators and preaching friars clash in my mind, it would be that I might afterwards spend an hour in solitude, where the pyramid of Cestius stands against the wall, and points to the humbler tombs of Keats and Shelley.

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"Keats, in his *Endymion*, is richer in imagery than either [Chaucer or Burns]: and there are passages in which no poet has arrived at the same excellence on the same ground. Time alone was wanting to complete a poet, who already far surpassed all his contemporaries in this country in the poet's most noble attributes. . . . We will now return to Shelley. Innocent and careless as a boy, he possessed all the delicate feelings of a gentleman, all the discrimination of a scholar, and united, in just degrees, the ardour of the poet with the patience and forbearance of the philosopher. His generosity and charity went far beyond those of any man (I believe) at present in existence. He was never known to speak evil of an enemy, unless that enemy had done some grievous injustice to another: and he divided his income of only one thousand pounds with the fallen and afflicted."

After expressing his deep regret at the misunderstanding which had kept them strangers, Landor concludes:

"As to what remains of him, now life is over, he occupies the third place among the poets of the present age, and is incomparably the most elegant, graceful, and harmonious of the prose writers."

Landor's implied order among the poets in the above words is, strange as it may seem, Southey, Wordsworth, Shelley. Republishing the conversation twenty years later, he varies the last words as follows:

"He occupies, if not the highest, almost the highest, place among our poets of the present age; no humble station; and is among the most elegant, graceful, and harmonious of the prose writers."

With reference to his own position among his fellow-writers, Landor is as totally and cordially free from jealousy as it is possible for a man to be. At the same time he has no doubts; and the text or notes of these personal dialogues occasionally contain a remark in the following stately key, "What I write is not written on slate, and no finger, not of Time himself, who dips it in the clouds of years, can efface it;" and occasionally a derisive challenge to his reviewers—let the sturdiest of them take the ten worst of his dialogues, "and if he equals them in ten years I will give him a hot wheaten roll and a pint of brown stout for breakfast."

Landor panted for the immediate publication of his new edition, but was again foiled by his own impetuosity. Some want of tact in a letter of Taylor's, some slight delays of payment and correspondence on his part, together with the irritation Landor had not unnaturally felt under his timorous censorship, led to an outbreak which made all future relations between them impossible. Landor's annoyance and his suspicions having been inflamed in the course of conversation with Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt, his imagination swiftly added fuel to the fire, and he presently exploded, writing to accuse Taylor of every kind of misconduct, and proclaiming every kind of desperate resolution in consequence: "His first villainy instigated me to throw my fourth volume, in its imperfect state, into the fire, and has cost me nine-tenths of my fame as a writer. His next villainy will entail perhaps a chancery suit on my children—for at its commencement I blow my brains out. This cures me for ever, if I live, of writing what could be published; and I will take good care that my son shall not suffer in the same way. Not a line of any kind will I leave behind me. My children shall be carefully warned

against literature." Was ever ancient Roman so forgetful of himself? Was ever overgrown schoolboy so incorrigible?

Landor's "for ever" rarely lasted more than a few weeks, and it is to his credit that when Julius Hare replied to all this with a perfectly manly and straightforward letter of remonstrance, justifying his friend Taylor in all but a few unimportant particulars, Landor received the rebuke in silence, and continued to entrust to Hare the farther arrangements concerning his book. The materials intended for his fourth volume he had, as we have just read, destroyed. But within a few months more he had produced new dialogues enough not only for one, but for two additional volumes, and in the meantime another publisher had been found in the person of Colburn. Landor's share of the profits on his first edition had been a hundred and seventy pounds odd. For the second edition he received in advance two hundred pounds. Its first two volumes appeared in 1826; the third, the new volume, dedicated to Bolivar, not until 1828, and these three volumes were now regarded as constituting the "first series" of the work. Some fresh slight disagreements having arisen, the fourth and fifth volumes, comprising the "second series," were entrusted to yet another publisher, Duncan, and appeared in 1829. These two new volumes contain between them twenty-seven more dialogues of the old diversified character. That of Lucullus and Cæsar is the loftiest, most thoughtful, and urbane, next to that of the two Ciceros, among the more tranquil of Landor's Roman dialogues. The conversation of Diogenes and Plato, allowing for the peculiar view which Landor had formed of Plato's character and genius, is at once the most pungent and the most majestic of the Greek. In the dialogue of Metellus and

Marius at the walls of Numantia, Landor embodies with masterly imagination the inexorable spirit of Roman conquest; in that of Leofric and Godiva the charm of bridal tenderness and the invincibility of womanly compassion; in that of Lady Lisle and Lady Elizabeth Gaunt, condemned to death during the bloody assize for sheltering the partisans of Monmouth, the constancy of martyrdom and the divine persistence of more than Christian forgiveness. Landor's own favourite conversation of all was that in which the philosopher Epicurus instructs at once in wisdom and in dalliance his girl-pupils Leontion and Ternissa. A scarcely less ideal charm is breathed by Landor over the relations of his own contemporary Trelawny with the daughter of the Klepht leader Odysseus, in the introduction of a dialogue which turns afterwards on the discussion of European, and especially of Greek, politics. In a short scene between Peleus and Thetis he unites with the full charm of Hellenic mythology the full vividness of human passion. Satirical conversations between the French ministers Villèle and Corbière, the English Pitt and Canning, and the Portuguese Prince Miguel and his mother, give vent more or less felicitously to his illimitable contempt for the ministers and ruling families of modern states.

Besides the contents of these five volumes, written and published between the years 1821 and 1829, and containing in all about eighty *Conversations*, Landor had before the latter date written some twenty more, which he intended for publication in a sixth. But from one reason and another this sixth volume never appeared, and the materials which should have composed it were for the most part only made public in the collected edition of Landor's writings issued in 1846. Counting these, and the increase in the number of the original dialogues effected by divid-

ing some of them into two, and adding those which he wrote afterwards at intervals until the year of his death, the total number of *Imaginary Conversations* left by Landor amounts to just short of a hundred and fifty.

Those written in the eight years now under review include, therefore, about two-thirds of the whole. We have seen with what ardour and facility, and with what a miscellaneous selection of speakers and of topics, they were produced. Their range extends over the greater part of life, literature, and history. Landor himself, and his editors after him, devised in the sequel various modes of grouping and classifying them; but none of these classifications are satisfactory. *Conversations of the Greeks and Romans* form, indeed, one distinct historical division, but not a division on which it is desirable to insist. It has often been said of Landor that he wrote of the Greeks more like a Greek, and of the Romans more like a Roman, than any other modern, and the saying in my judgment is true. But his treatment of other themes is not different in kind from his treatment of these, and he has not been better inspired by the romance and the example of antiquity than by the charm of Italy or the glory of England. The original title of the two first volumes, *Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen*, by no means covered the whole of their contents; and the editorial divisions afterwards established by Mr. Forster, viz., *Greeks and Romans*, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, *Literary Men*, *Famous Women*, and *Miscellaneous*, cross and overlap each other in many directions. To my mind the only vital and satisfactory division between one class and another of Landor's prose conversations is that between the dramatic and the non-dramatic; the words are inexact, and the distinction is far from being sharp or absolute;

but what I mean is this, that some of the compositions in question are full of action, character, and passion, and those I call the dramatic group; in others there is little action, and character and passion are replaced by disquisition and reflection, and those I call by contrast the non-dramatic. In the former class Landor is in each case taken up with the creative task of realizing a heroic or pathetic situation, and keeps himself entirely in the background. In the latter class his energetic personality is apt to impose itself upon his speakers, who are often little more than masks behind which he retires in order to utter his own thoughts and opinions with the greater convenience and variety.

The dramatic conversations are mostly brief, and range over almost all periods of time. Central examples of the class are, from Roman antiquity, the dialogues of Marcellus and Hannibal, and of Tiberius and Vipsania; from the history or historic legend of England, those of Leofric and Godiva, of John of Gaunt and Joanna of Kent, of Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn, and of Lady Lisle and Lady Elizabeth Gaunt; from the history of France, those of Joan of Arc and Agnes Sorel, and of Bossuet and the Duchesse de Fontanges; from that of Italy, the interviews of Dante with Beatrice, and of Leonora di Este with Father Panigarola. In these and similar cases Landor merely takes a motive suggested by history, being more apt to avoid than to make use of any actually recorded incident, and preferring to call up, not any scene which to our positive knowledge ever was, but only such a scene as might have been, enacted, the characters and circumstances being given. It is, therefore, from the imaginative and not from the literal point of view that his work is to be approached. His endeavour is to embody the spirit of historical

epochs in scenes of which the actions and the emotions shall be at the same time new and just. In many instances his success is complete. The spirit, as I have already said, of Roman conquest stands typically fixed in a dialogue like that of Marius and Metellus: so does the spirit of Norman chivalry in one like that of Tancredi and Constantia: and of English honour in that of John of Gaunt and the Queen. In the actual dramatic conduct of the scenes Landor, in these short compositions, shows a creative power and insight equal to that of the very greatest masters. Uniting the extreme of force to the extreme of tenderness, he pursues and seizes with convincing mastery the subtlest movements of impassioned feeling. Out of the nobility and tenderness of his own heart he imagines heights and delicacies of those qualities unmatched, as I cannot but think, by any English writer except Shakspeare. Pitching the emotions of his actors at an ideal height, his aim, we must farther remember, is to fix and embody them in an ideal cast of language: language of a perfection and a precision which no stress of feeling is allowed to impair or discompose. The emotion, as thus embodied in words as it were of marble, Landor leaves always as "naked" as possible, as much divested of accident and superfluity. Explanations and stage directions of all sorts the reader has to supply for himself, the author furnishing nothing of that nature except what is to be inferred from the bare utterances of his speakers. At the same time we are aware that he has himself realized the action of every scene with perfect clearness. These high-strung dramatic dialogues used to cost Landor in the composition both throes and tears. As in the writing of *Count Julian* long ago, so now in that of *Tiberius and Vipsania*, he tells us how he watched and wept over his work by

night, and how every feature and gesture of his personages stood visibly present before his mind's eye. But as in *Count Julian*, so now, he fails occasionally to take the reader with him. Want of instinctive sympathy with his reader is the weak point of Landor's lofty art, and in these dialogues he is so perfectly sure of his own way that he sometimes forgets to put into our hands the clue which we need in order to follow him. But usually nothing more is necessary than a little attention, a little deliberateness in reading—and work so full and rich is to be read attentively and deliberately if at all—in order to make all clear. The speeches as they succeed one another then become to us at the same time both monuments of the emotions of the actors and landmarks indicating the crisis which their actions have reached; and we read between the lines how the heart-stricken Thetis has sunk through the embrace of Peleus; how the maidens in the house of Xanthus shrank one behind another in inquisitive awe at the beauty of Rhodope, the stranger slave from Phrygia; how Marius adventures and returns over blood and ashes within the walls of the beleaguered city of Numantia; how Zenobia is hurled by her despairing Rhadamistus into the eddies of the Araxes; how Godiva descends from her palfrey to kneel and pray when Leofric has sworn his cruel oath; how Dante for the last time rests his fevered head upon the maiden bosom of Beatrice; how Anne Boleyn swoons at the unlooked-for entrance of her lord; or how the palace dog is heard lapping as it falls the blood of the murdered Czar. Or sometimes the incidents are of another kind, and we realize with amusement how the venerable Bossuet bustles to pick up his ring lest the child-mistress of Louis XIV. should stoop for it; or how that monarch himself lets slip by inadvertence into his

breeches the strip of silk which the same prelate and confessor has enjoined him to place next his skin by way of penance. For among the dialogues of this dramatic group some are comic, or at least satiric, branding the delinquencies of priests and kings in a vein of Aristophanic or Rabelaisian exaggeration. These, however, are seldom among Landor's best work, marble being not the most suitable material for caricature, nor weight and polish its most appropriate excellencies. In general it may be truly said of Landor that he rises or falls according to the nature of his subject, and is at his best only in the highest things. Especially is this true in his treatment of women. Both in the physical and the spiritual, Landor's feeling for the feminine is as strong as it is exquisite; there is no writer, Shakspeare alone once more excepted, who surpasses him in it. Hardly Perdita or Imogen themselves are made more beautiful to us by words than Landor's maiden image of Hope—"her countenance was tinged with so delicate a colour that it appeared an effluence of an irradiated cloud passing over us in the heavens;" or than his Greek Thelymnia in her crown of myrtle—"there was something in the tint of the tender sprays resembling that of the hair they encircled; the blossoms too were white as her forehead." Hardly Imogen again, hardly Cordelia, hardly Desdemona, are more nobly realized types of constancy and sweetness, of womanly heroism and womanly resignation, than are Landor's Joan of Arc or his Anne Boleyn during the brief scenes in which they are brought before us. But there is one weak point in Landor's dealing with women which must not be overlooked. When he comes down from these heights, and deals with the every-day timidities of young love, and simplicities of girlish feeling, he sometimes, it must be confessed, goes altogether astray, and

strikes the note of false innocence and flirting "archness." His young women, including the Greek, are on these occasions apt to say "audacious!" "you must be a very bold man!" "put me down!" and generally to comport themselves in a manner giggly, missish, and disconcerting.

To give the reader a just idea of Landor's manner in this class of his *Conversations*, it would be desirable to set before him at least two examples, one to illustrate the extreme of his strength, the other of his delicacy, in dramatic imagination. Space failing for this, let us detach an example of an intermediate kind from a dialogue to which allusion has several times been made already, that of *Leofric and Godiva*, beginning at the point where the petitions of the tender-hearted bride begin to overbear her lord's obstinate resentment against his people:

"*Leofric.* We must hold solemn festivals.

Godiva. We must indeed.

Leofric. Well then!

Godiva. Is the clamorousness that succeeds the death of God's dumb creatures, are crowded halls, are slaughtered cattle, festivals? Are maddening songs and giddy dances, and hireling praises from party-coloured coats? Can the voice of a minstrel tell us better things of ourselves than our own internal one might tell us? or can his breath make our breath softer in sleep? O my beloved! let everything be a joyance to us; it will, if we will. Sad is the day, and worse must follow, when we hear the blackbird in the garden and do not throb with joy. But Leofric, the high festival is strewn by the servant of God upon the heart of man. It is gladness, it is thanksgiving, it is the orphan, the starveling prest to the bosom, and bidden as its first commandment to remember its benefactor. We will hold this festival; the guests are ready: we may keep it up for weeks and months and years together, and always be the happier and the richer for it. The beverage of this feast, O Leofric, is sweeter than bee or flower or vine can give us: it flows from heaven;

and in heaven will it again be poured out abundantly to him who pours it out here abundantly.

Leofric. Thou art wild.

Godiva. I have indeed lost myself; the words are not mine: I only feel and utter them. Some Power, some good, kind Power melts me (body and soul and voice) into tenderness and love. O my husband, we must obey it. Look upon me! look upon me! lift again your sweet eyes from the ground! I will not cease to supplicate; I dare not.

Leofric. We will think upon it.

Godiva. O never say that word! those who utter it are false men. What! think upon goodness when you can be good! Let not their infants cry for food! the mother of our blessed Lord will hear them; us never afterward.

Leofric. Here comes the bishop: we are now but one mile from the walls. Why dismountest thou? no bishop can expect it. Godiva, my honour and rank among men are humbled by this: Earl Godwin will hear of it: up! up! the bishop hath seen it: he urgeth his horse onward: dost thou not hear him now upon the solid turf behind thee?

Godiva. Never, no, never will I rise, O Leofric, until you remit this most impious tax, this tax on hard labour, on hard life.

Leofric. Turn round: look how the fat nag canters, as to the tune of a sinner's psalm, slow and hard-breathing. . . . What reason or right can the people have to complain while their bishop's steed is so sleek and well caparisoned? Inclination to change, desire to abolish old usages. . . . Rise, up for shame! they shall smart for it, idlers. Sir bishop, I must blush for my young bride.

Godiva. My husband, my husband! will you pardon the city?

Leofric. O, sir bishop! I could not think you would have seen her in this plight. Will I pardon? yea, Godiva, by the holy rood, will I pardon the city when thou ridest naked at noontide through the streets.

Godiva. O my dear, cruel Leofric, where is the heart you gave me? It was not so! Can mine have hardened it?

Bishop. Earl, thou abashest thy spouse; she turneth pale and weepeth. Lady Godiva, peace be with thee.

Godiva. Thanks, holy man! peace will be with me when peace is with your city. Did you hear my lord's hard word?

Bishop. I did, lady.

Godiva. Will you remember it, and pray against it?

Bishop. Wilt thou forget it?

Godiva. I am not offended.

Bishop. Angel of peace and purity!

Godiva. But treasure it up in your heart. Deem it an incense; good only when it is consumed and spent, ascending with prayer and sacrifice. And now what was it?

Bishop. Christ save us! that he will pardon the city when thou ridest naked through the streets at noon.

Godiva. Did he not swear an oath?

Bishop. He sware by the holy rood.

Godiva. My Redeemer! thou hast heard it! save the city!

Leofric. We are upon the beginning of the pavement: these are the suburbs: let us think of feasting: we may pray afterward: to-morrow we shall rest.

Godiva. No judgments then to-morrow, Leofric?

Leofric. None: we will carouse.

Godiva. The saints of heaven have given me strength and confidence: my prayers are heard: the heart of my beloved is now softened.

Leofric. Ay, ay.

Godiva. Say, dearest Leofric, is there indeed no other hope, no other mediation?

Leofric. I have sworn. Besides, thou hast made me redden and turn my face away from thee, and all these knaves have seen it. This adds to the city's crime.

Godiva. I have blushed, too, Leofric, and was not rash nor cruel.

Leofric. But thou, my sweetest, art given to blushing; there is no conquering it in thee. I wish thou hadst not alighted so hastily and roughly: it hath shaken down a sheaf of thy hair: take heed not to sit upon it, lest it anguish thee. Well done! it mingleth now sweetly with the cloth of gold upon the saddle, running here and there as if it had life and faculties and business, and were working thereupon some newer and cunninger device. O my beauteous Eve! there is a paradise about thee! the world is refreshed as thou movest and breathest on it. . . . I cannot see or think of evil where thou art. I would throw my arms even here about thee. . . . No signs for me!

no shaking of sunbeams! no reproof or frown or wonderment. . . . I *will* say it . . . now then for worse. . . . I would close with my kisses thy half-open lips, ay, and those lovely and loving eyes, before the people.

Godiva. To-morrow you shall kiss me, and they shall bless you for it. I shall be very pale, for to-night I must fast and pray.

Leofric. I do not hear thee; the voices of the folks are so low under this archway.

Godiva (to herself). God help them! good kind souls! I hope they will not crowd about me so to-morrow. O Leofric! could my name be forgotten, and yours alone remembered. But perhaps my innocence may save me from reproach . . . and how many as innocent are in fear and famine! No eye will open on me but fresh from tears. What a young mother for so large a family! Shall my youth harm me? Under God's hand it gives me courage. Ah, when will the morning come? ah, when will the noon be over?"

The second class of Landor's dialogues, the dialogues of discussion and reflexion, are both much more numerous, and individually, for the most part, much longer than those of which I have thus far spoken. They also range over almost the whole field of history, and include several of the satiric kind, in which modern statesmen are generally the speakers. The description non-dramatic must not be taken too strictly, inasmuch as Landor often introduces and concludes a purely discursive and reflective dialogue with passages of pleasant intercourse and play of feeling, and sometimes enlivens the whole course of the discussions with such accompaniments. Or, again, he grasps and realizes, in a way that may fairly be called dramatic, whether it coincides with our historical ideas or not, the character of this or that individual speaker. But at least as often either one of the speakers or both are mere mouthpieces for the utterance of Landor's own thoughts and sentiments. He expressly warns his readers, indeed, against

taking for his own any of the opinions put into the mouths of his personages; but the reader familiar with Landor's other writings and with his correspondence will have no difficulty in recognizing where the living man expresses himself behind the historic mask. Thus we know that it is Landor himself who is contending for toleration and open-mindedness in matters of religious faith, alike in the person of Lucian and in that of Melanchthon; for simplicity and integrity of thought and speech in those of Diogenes and of Epictetus. It is Landor who transports himself in imagination into the gardens of Epicurus, and holds delightful converse with Leontion and Ternissa; it is Landor who, through the mouths of Anacreon and of the priest of Ammon, rebukes the ambition of Polycrates and of Alexander. Landor behind the mask of Andrew Marvel glorifies against the time-serving archbishop the great poet of the English republic, and Landor dictates the true policy of his country through the lips of the Greek or Spanish revolutionary leaders. It is the greatest tribute to the range of his powers and of his knowledge that he could adapt his thoughts to so great a diversity of ages and characters without too obvious a forfeiture of verisimilitude in any given case.

Landor's whole treatment of Plato is very characteristic of his way of thinking and working. He would accept no secondhand verdict in matters either of literature or life; and when he had examined any matter for himself, was none the worse pleased if he found his judgment running counter to the received opinion. Although theoretically he disliked and despised paradox, he was certainly "well content," as Emerson puts it, "to impress his English whim upon the immutable past," and to refashion ancient glories in a mould of his own construction. At

Florence he went, he tells us, every morning for a long while to the Magliabecchian Library, and read the whole works of Plato through. Considering what the works of Plato are, and that Landor was by no means a perfectly accomplished Greek scholar, it is evident that his reading must have been perfunctory. But it was enough to inspire him with a great distaste, and a considerable portion of contempt, for that illustrious author. Landor was never blind to genius, but in the genius of Plato he saw and noted little except the flaws and singularities. He has carefully collected, apart from their connexion, examples of everything that is practically unreasonable in Plato's views of civil government; of everything that is fantastic in his allegories, captious in his reasonings, and ambiguous or redundant in his diction. He has made Plato cut a figure both pretentious and ridiculous in his intercourse with Diogenes, who lectures him on style and on morals, reproves his want of simplicity and independence, discharges at him a whole artillery of wise and beautiful sayings in Landor's own finest manner, and even knocks out of his hand his especial weapons of poetical eloquence, outdoing him with a passage of splendid rhetoric on the nothingness and restlessness of human power as compared with the power of the gentlest of the elements, the air. Neither is Landor content with this discomfiture of Plato at the hands of his contemporary philosopher of the tub; he returns to the charge where we should least have expected it, and in a dialogue of Lord Chatham with Lord Chesterfield makes the great statesman turn the conversation on ancient philosophy, and edify his visitor with an exposition of the faults and fallacies which he has found in Plato. This unexpectedness, which is yet not the same thing as paradox, this preference for, and habit of lighting on, the

thing *indictum ore alio*, is an essential part of Landor's genius.

To return to the general character of these *Conversations*, their weakness lies in Landor's inaptitude alike for close or sustained reasoning, and for stirring or rapid narrative; his characters seldom attempt argument, and almost as often as they attempt story-telling, they fail. The true strength of the discursive *Conversations* resides in the extraordinary richness, the originality of the reflexions, and meditative depth and insight scattered through them — reflexions generally clenched and illuminated by images, and adding the quality of beauty to the qualities of solid ingenuity or wisdom. Some of the dialogues are filled almost from beginning to end with such reflexions. In some they are few and far between. Sometimes they are set in a framework of graceful incident, and amidst beautiful magnanimities and urbanities of intercourse; sometimes they have to be sought out through a maze of more or less tedious disquisitions, confused anecdotes, and unsuccessful witticisms. Occasionally Landor spoils an otherwise admirable dialogue of antiquity by intruding into it a sarcastic apologue against some object of his political aversion in the modern world. Occasionally he makes his personages discuss with much fulness and rotundity of speech questions of learning and of curiosity that can be interesting only to himself; in a word, he does that which he was so keenly sensible of Wordsworth's mistake in allowing himself to do — he drones. It is a classical, and from the point of view of style an exemplary, form of droning, but it is droning still. To the lover of fine thoughts there is not one of these dialogues which it is not worth his while to read through and through for the sake of the jewels it contains. But there are not

many which, like the dialogues of Diogenes and Plato, of the two Ciceros, of Marvel and Archbishop Parker, he can recommend to the ordinarily intelligent reader in the confidence that he will not be fatigued before the end. It should be said, however, that the appetite for Landor always grows with the reading. The mansions of his mind are so various, and the riches treasured up in them so vast, that if they contain some chill and musty corridors we may well be content to traverse these too with patience. When Landor is good, he is so admirably and so originally good, so full of crushing and massive force on one page, and of a delicacy surpassing that of the tenderest poets on another, that to know him well repays tenfold whatever hours of weariness his weak places cost. He never emphasizes or separates his own good sayings, but delivers himself of his best and of his worst with the same composure and completeness.

During these eight years of sustained and, on the whole, victorious literary effort, the outward life of Landor had not failed to exhibit the usual contrasts between his doctrine and his practice. The author of the maxim "neither to give nor to take offence is surely the best thing in life," had been taking and giving offence as superfluously as ever. We have already witnessed the bursting of two storms in the course of his relations with his publishers; others had gathered nearer home. Landor had found or invented cause of dudgeon against members both of the English embassy and of the native magistrature at Florence. He had, it is said, challenged a secretary of legation for whistling in the street when Mrs. Landor passed, and had written a formal complaint to the Foreign Office concerning the character of "the wretches they employed abroad." He had persuaded himself that he was a man

marked out for petty persecution by the agents of authority both in Italy and England. He was on terms of permanent misunderstanding with the police. Some of the expressions and anecdotes concerning Florentine society which he had introduced into one of his first *Conversations* had been translated, and had further helped to plunge him in hot water. With his lofty standards of honour and veracity, of independence and decorum, he had indeed conceived a sovereign contempt for the character, if not of the Italian people in general, at any rate of the city population in the midst of which he lived. His arbitrary indignations and eccentricities made him seem to them, on his part, the most ideally mad of all mad Englishmen. His residence at the Medici palace was brought to an untimely end by a quarrel with his landlord, a marquis bearing the historic name of the house. Landor imagined that this marquis had unfairly seduced away his coachman, and wrote to complain accordingly. The next day the marquis came strutting with his hat on into the room where Mrs. Landor was sitting with some visitors. "He had scarcely," writes one of these, "advanced three steps from the door, when Landor walked up to him quickly and knocked his hat off, then took him by the arm and turned him out. You should have heard Landor's shout of laughter at his own anger when it was all over; inextinguishable laughter, which none of us could resist." Incidents of this kind, however, were too frequent in Landor's life to affect him very deeply. His wrath usually exhaled itself either in a fit of laughter or an epigram—if anything so solid as a Landorian epigram can justly be called an exhalation. At worst a quarrel would sometimes give him a bilious attack, or aggravate the annual fit of quinsy to which he had by this time become subject.

Domestic and social consolations were not wanting to Landor in these days. His conjugal relations continued to be for some time endurable, if far from ideal; while in his children, the fourth and last of whom was born in 1825, he took a constantly increasing delight. He loved and cherished them with a passionate, almost an animal-intensity of affection. In their games *Babbo* was one of themselves, the most gleeful and the most riotous of playmates. He could not bear to be parted from them, and went half beside himself with anxiety when, during a visit to Naples, he heard that some of them were down with a childish illness. In his letters to his sisters and his mother at home, he made those kindly hearts the participators in his parental delights. This home correspondence of Landor's never flagged during his mother's life. He wrote to her about his doings and about the children, and she replied from Warwick or Ipsley with all the gossip of the county. Knowing his aversion for business, she did not trouble him much with details of his property or accounts, but was full of plans for his future and that of his children. She hoped that when she was gone he would come home and settle down to the life of an English country gentleman, and that he would get as much enjoyment out of Ipsley as she had herself got all her life. She hoped, and it was Landor's error and misfortune in this to have neglected her advice, that he would send his sons home to England to be educated. His bent towards literature Landor had not, indeed, like many men of genius, derived from his mother. She looked upon his exertions in this kind with a vague respect not unmingled with alarm. In thanking him for a copy of his Latin poetry which he had sent her, she had said it was pronounced by the learned to be very delightful, "but one cannot read it,

to understand it, oneself." And now, when she heard of the *Imaginary Conversations*, she only hoped he was not injuring his health by too much work. "For God's sake do not hurt your eyes, nor rack your brains too much, to amuse the world by writing; but take care of your health, which will be of greater use to your family."

To his other occupations Landor began to add, soon after his arrival at Florence, that of a picture collector. He formed his own taste and his own opinions in connoisseurship as in other things, and acted on them with his usual confidence and precipitancy. He anticipated the modern predilection for the pre-Raphaelite masters, whose pictures were then in no demand. Of the works of these and other schools, an almost incredible number, some good, but according to skilled evidence the greater part bad or indifferent, passed through Landor's hands in the course of the next fifteen years. He liked the rooms in which he lived to be denuded of nearly all furniture except pictures, with which their walls were covered from floor to ceiling. He was a great giver, and fond, especially in later years, of sending away a guest the richer for a token in the shape of a picture from his walls. Always disinclined to general society, and particularly to official society, he found in Florence as much companionship as he desired of the sort that suited him best. Among the residents his chief associates were Mr. Seymour Kirkup, then and for half a century afterwards a central figure of the English colony in the city; Charles Armitage Brown, the friend and comrade of Keats; and a Mr. Leckie, whose company is said to have been more joyous than decorous, and more welcome to Landor than to his wife. Francis Hare, too, was often in Florence, and when he and Landor were together, the encounter of wits ran high. Both were men of amaz-

ing knowledge and amazing memory; their self-confidence was about equal. Landor was in intercourse of this kind the more urbane and forbearing of the two, Hare the more overpoweringly brilliant and impetuous. They disputed often, but never quarrelled, and remained faithful friends to the last. Landor's letters to Hare during his absence are as full as those to Southey of the varied matter of his thoughts, set forth in his energetic, disconnected way, and often containing germs which we find developed in the *Conversations* of the time.

After the appearance of the first two volumes of his *Conversations* Landor was habitually sought out, as a man of acknowledged genius and fame, by the more distinguished of the English who came to Florence. He seldom accepted dinners or other invitations, but received in his own house those visitors who brought him introductions. One day Hogg, the friend of Shelley, was announced while Hare was sitting in the room. Landor said that he felt himself like La Fontaine with all the better company of the beasts about him. Hogg was delighted with his interview, and wrote afterwards that if he wished to procure any one for whom he cared a real benefit, it would be the friendship of Walter Savage Landor. In 1825 came Leigh Hunt. In his short-lived paper, the *Liberal*, Byron's *Vision of Judgment* with its preface had been published three years before, but he had lately made his *amende*, as he tells us, to Landor, with whom he was always thenceforward on good terms.

Soon afterwards came Hazlitt; who brought no introduction, but said he would beard the lion in his den, "and walked up to his house," says Mr. Kirkup, "one winter's morning in nankeen shorts and white stockings, was made much of by the royal animal, and often returned at night,

for Landor was much out in the day, in all weathers." Of their conversations one is recorded in which Hazlitt expounded to his breathless and, as it seemed, envious host, the simple process by which, under the Scotch law, he had been enabled to get himself divorced by consent from his wife; and another in which, on Landor saying that he had never seen Wordsworth, Hazlitt asked, "But you have seen a horse, I suppose?" and being answered yes, continued, "Well, sir, if you have seen a horse, I mean his head, sir, you may say you have seen Wordsworth, sir." But the visitors with whom Landor formed at this time the closest and most permanent friendship were not Hunt or Hazlitt, but the Irish nobleman who, with his gifted wife and the French Apollo who had lately attached himself to their household, was making at this time his memorable Italian tour. Lord Blessington had been known long ago to Landor as Lord Mountjoy, and when he came to Florence made haste to renew their acquaintance. In his wife, the fascinating daughter of a ruffianly Irish squireen, married at fourteen to a ruffianly English officer, and again, after some years of widowhood, to this amiable, cultivated, sumptuous, gouty, reformed *roué* of an Irish peer — in Lady Blessington Landor found the most appreciative and most constant of friends. Of all the celebrities of her acquaintance, and that means of all who were living in her day, Landor was the one for whom she conceived from the first, and retained until her death, the warmest attachment and respect. She thought him the most genuinely polite man in Europe, and it was a point upon which she had a right to speak. With Lord Blessington and Count D'Orsay Landor became almost as fast friends as with my Lady, and he spent most of the evenings of one whole summer, and two a week of the next, in the enjoyment of their so-

ciety in the beautiful Casa Pelosi, the villa which they occupied on the Lung' Arno. In 1827 the Blessingtons persuaded him to join them in a yachting trip to Naples; but as on a former trip with Hare to Rome, so again now Landor's pleasure was marred by his feverish anxiety on account of his children. It was on the former of these expeditions that Landor had received the first childish letter from his son Arnold, and had ended his own answer with the words—

"I shall never be quite happy until I see you again and put my cheek upon your head. Tell my sweet Julia that if I see twenty little girls I will not romp with any of them before I romp with her, and kiss your two dear brothers for me. You must always love them as much as I love you, and you must teach them how to be good boys, which I cannot do so well as you can. God preserve and bless you, my own Arnold. My heart beats as if it would fly to you, my own fierce creature. We shall very soon meet. Love your BABBO."

In 1827 there came to the Villa Castiglione another visitor, with whom Landor formed an immediate friendship. This was Mr. Ablett of Llanbedr, a Welsh gentleman of fortune and literary tastes, who conceived an enthusiasm for Landor's genius and his person, commissioned a bust of him by Gibson, and a year afterwards, Landor being then looking out for a new place of abode, and desiring one in the country near Florence, came forward to furnish him the means of securing for himself a home that seemed the ideal of his dreams. This was the Villa Gherardesca, a fine and ancient house, surrounded with a considerable extent of farm and garden, on a height a little below Fiesole, to the right hand of the road ascending to that city from Florence. By the beauty of its prospect and the charm of its associations, this site was for Landor the choicest that could be found. His favourite of all Italian

authors, his favourite, indeed, of all in the world after Shakspeare, Milton, and the ancients, was Boccaccio. The Valley of Ladies, described in the most enchanting passage of the *Decameron*, lies within the grounds of the Villa Gherardesca, and the twin streams of Affrico and Mensola, celebrated in the *Ninfale*, run through them. The price of this enviable property so far exceeded any means immediately at Landor's disposal, that he had never even thought of becoming its purchaser. But Mr. Ablett insisted on advancing the required amount. He would take no interest, and Landor was after some years able to repay the capital of the loan out of the yearly savings on his income. It was in 1829 that he removed with his family into their new home.

CHAPTER VI.

FIESOLE AND ENGLAND—THE EXAMINATION OF SHAKSPEARE —PERICLES AND ASPASIA—THE PENTAMERON.

[1829—1837.]

THE years spent by Landor in his villa at Fiesole seem, on the whole, to have been the happiest in his life. His children were not yet of the age when the joy which children give either ceases or is transformed; they were still his rapturously loved playmates; and the farm and gardens of the villa made the rarest of playgrounds. Father and children alike found endless occupation and pastime in delving, planting, clearing, gardening, and the keeping of pets. For the first time since he went abroad Landor's love of animals had now full play. Besides the great house-dog Parigi, we hear of the cat Cincirillo, and the difficulty of keeping him from the birds; of a tame marten, for whom when he died his master composed a feeling epitaph; a tame leveret, and all manner of other pets. The place was as beautiful and fertile as it was rich in associations. From amid the clouds of olive, and spires of cypress within his gates, Landor loved to look down to right and left along the sweep of Valdarno, or away towards the distant woods of Vallombrosa, or the misty ridges above Arezzo; he loved at sunset to watch all the hills of Tuscany turning to amethyst beneath those skies of pearl.

"Let me sit down and muse by thee
Awhile, aerial Fiesole,"

he wrote; and even while he found his new home the best, his thoughts went back with affection to that which he had left in Wales.

"Llanthony! an ungenial clime,
And the broad wing of restless Time,
Have rudely swept thy mossy walls
And rocked thy abbots in their palls.
I loved thee by thy streams of yore,
By distant streams I love thee more."

To his friend Francis Hare, who had married not long before, Landor writes:

". . . Did I tell you I have bought a place in the country, near Fiesole? I shall say no more about it to you, but try whether Mrs. H. will not bring you to see it in the spring.

DEAR MRS. HARE,—Do then conduct your slave (of whom I dare say you are prouder than ever Zenobia would have been if she had taken Aurelian) back again to Florence.—No, not to Florence, but to Fiesole. Be it known, I am master of the very place to which the greatest genius of Italy, or the Continent, conducted those ladies who told such pleasant tales in the warm weather, and the very scene of his Ninfale. Poor Affrico, for some misconduct, has been confined within stone walls. There no longer is lake or river, but a little canal. The place, however, is very delightful, and I have grapes, figs, and a nightingale—all at your service—but you cannot be treated with all on the same day."

To his sisters Landor writes with more detail and more enthusiasm. He tells the whole story of Mr. Ablett's unexpected kindness. "It is true his fortune is very large; but if others equal him in fortune, no human being ever equalled him in generosity." Landor goes on to describe the house, the size and arrangement of the rooms, the

views, the two gardens (one with a fountain), the conservatories for lemons and oranges. He tells too of the cypresses, vines, roses, arbutuses, bays, and French fruit-trees which he is planting; of the wholesomeness of the soil and climate. "I have the best water, the best air, and the best oil in the world. My country now is Italy, where I have a residence for life, and literally may sit under my own vine and my own fig-tree. I have some thousands of the one and some scores of the other, with myrtles, pomegranates, gagias, and mimosas in great quantity. I intend to make a garden not very unlike yours at Warwick; but alas! time is wanting. I may live another ten years, but do not expect it. In a few days, whenever the weather will allow it, I have four mimosas ready to place round my tomb, and a friend who is coming to plant them." The friend here in question is no other than Landor's old love Ianthè, who to his delight had reappeared about this time in Florence. Her first husband had died within a year of Landor's own ill-starred marriage. She had now lately buried her second, and was the object of the addresses at the same time of a French duke and an English earl; neither of which were ultimately accepted. The course of her own and Landor's lives brought them across one another's path once and again before her death. Those who saw them in company have described the tender and assiduous homage which marked his bearing to her above all other women, and his allusions to her in prose and verse show that she never ceased to be the ideal of his inward thoughts.

The letter just quoted was written on New Year's Day, 1830. A few weeks before, Landor had lost his mother. That kind, just, and in her own way most shrewd and capable old lady, had been failing since the spring of

1829, and had died in October, at the close of her eighty-fifth year. "My mother's great kindness to me," writes Landor, "throughout the whole course of her life, made me perpetually think of her with the tenderest love. I am not sorry that she left me some token of her regard; but she gave me too many in her lifetime for me to think of taking any now." So Landor asks his sisters to keep the little legacies which his mother had left him. What is more, he insists on their continuing to have the enjoyment of Ipsley, and declines to allow the place to be let or its contents to be sold for his own benefit. For the rest, the tenour of Landor's life was little changed. His thoughts were as much his companions as ever. He was to be met at all seasons rambling alone, in old clothes and battered straw hat, upon the heights round Fiesole, and audibly, like Wordsworth "booing" about the hills of Cumberland, repeating to himself the masterpieces that he loved, or trying and balancing the clauses and periods of his own stately prose. He was constantly adding to and filling out his *Imaginary Conversations*. One or two pieces which he had first conceived in this form grew during those Fiesolan days, as we shall see by-and-by, to the proportions of independent books. But the first book which Landor published after he came to Fiesole was one not of prose conversations, but of poetry. He had been long urged by Francis Hare to bring out a revised selection from his early poems, which at present only existed in volumes so rare that it was almost impossible any longer to procure them. After some years of hesitation the project was at last carried out, and the result appeared in 1831, in the shape of a volume dedicated to Hare himself, and containing reprints of *Gebir*, of *Count Julian*, of some pieces chosen from the *Simonidea* and other earlier col-

lections, besides a few things which were now printed for the first time. From *Gebir*, as now and afterwards republished, Landor cut out all passages implying praise of Buonaparte or of revolutionary France. Following *Count Julian*, he printed three dramatic fragments, of which he had sent the manuscript to Southey from Pisa ten years before; two on the Spanish subject of Ines de Castro and Don Pedro; one, under the title *Ippolito di Este*, containing some recovered or rewritten fragments of the tragedy burnt long ago at Llanthony. Then followed the Icelandic tale of *Gunlang*, from the collection of 1805. Between the love-pieces and the elegies selected from the *Simonidea* came a number of miscellaneous poems, some old and some new. Landor showed that his wrath against his Welsh persecutors had not even yet subsided by printing a long and laboured set of Hudibrastics, written at the time against the adverse counsel Taunton. Much better to read, perhaps indeed the best of all Landor's short poems in the quality of deliberate, delicate, meditative description, is the *Fæsulan Idyl*, from which we have already quoted the admirable lines relating to the love of flowers.

All naturally was not idyllic, nor all peaceable, in Landor's new life. Having been robbed of some plate at the time when he was taking possession of his villa, he applied to the police, assuring them at the same time of his profound conviction of their corruptness and incompetence. Thereupon, apparently to his surprise, their feelings rose, and the quarrel very soon reached such a pitch that Landor was ordered to leave Tuscany, and did actually retreat as far as Lucca. Hence he wrote a fine courteous letter to the Grand Duke in person, who took the whole matter pleasantly; and Lord Normanby, Sir Robert Lawley, and other friends interceding, the order of expulsion was tacit-

ly regarded as a dead letter, and Landor came back in triumph. Very soon afterwards he was deep in a quarrel with a French neighbour of his own at Fiesole, a M. Antoir, living on a property of which the tenant had a customary right to the surplus water from the fountain of the Villa Gherardesca. The watering of Landor's flowers and shrubberies, and the English prodigality of the family in the matter of bathing, and the washing of stables, kennels, and cages, reduced this surplus to practically nothing. Hence a grievance, of course passionately resented. A duel between the disputants having been averted by the wisdom of Mr. Kirkup, whom Landor had chosen to be his second, there ensued a litigation which lasted for years; the case being tried and retried in all the courts of Tuscany.[1]

But these combative and explosive aspects of Landor's nature were much more rarely revealed in ordinary social intercourse than of old. The impression which he made during these years upon his favoured guests and visitors was one of noble geniality as well as of imposing force. A new, close, and joyous friendship formed by him in these days, and never dropped afterwards, was with Mr. Kenyon, the friend also of the Hares and of many of the most distinguished men of the next succeeding generation. He had during a part of his life at Fiesole a pleasant neighbour in the novelist G. P. R. James, to whom he afterwards made allusion as "my hearty Tory friend, Mr. James, whose *Mary of Burgundy* Scott himself (were he envious) might have envied." That zealous and open-minded cultivator of men of genius, Crabbe Robinson, al-

[1] The pleas brought forward on Landor's side, before the court of final appeal, constitute a stout quarto pamphlet, in a hundred and twelve numbered paragraphs, dated 1841.

ready familiar with Southey and Wordsworth, came to Florence in the summer of 1830, and presented himself immediately at the Villa Gherardesca. "To Landor's society," writes Robinson, "I owed much of my highest enjoyment during my stay at Florence. He was a man of florid complexion, with large, full eyes, altogether a 'leonine' man, and with a fierceness of tone well suited to his name; his decisions being confident, and on all subjects, whether of taste or life, unqualified; each standing for itself, not caring whether it was in harmony with what had gone before or would follow from the same oracular lips. He was conscious of his own infirmity of temper, and told me he saw few persons, because he could not bear contradiction. Certainly, I frequently did contradict him; yet his attentions to me, both this and the following year, were unwearied." He tells elsewhere how Landor used to invite him to his villa constantly of evenings, and send him back always at night under escort of the dog Parigi, who understood his duty perfectly, and would attend the visitor as far as the city gates, and duly return by himself to the villa. Robinson's account is further valuable as making us realize the mingled respect, amusement, and astonishment with which Landor was regarded by his Italian neighbours and workpeople. "*Tutti gl'Inglesi sono pazzi, ma questo poi!*"—such, according to another witness, was the sentence in which their impressions were summed up. His passionate dealings with his fellow-creatures, and his tenderness for the inanimate things of nature, were in like manner typified in the local legend which represented him as having once thrown his cook out of window, and instantly afterwards thrust out his head with the exclamation, "Good God, I forgot the violets!"

In the early summer of 1832, at the urgent request of

Mr. Ablett and of other friends, Landor left Fiesole on a visit to England. It was the first time he had been in his native country for eighteen years. His stay seems to have given almost unmixed pleasure both to himself and to those with whom he was brought in contact. He found his friend Madame de Molandé at Brighton, "in the midst of music, dancing, and fashionable people turned radicals. This amused me highly." The excitement concerning the passing of the reform bill was at that moment at its height: "The people are half mad about the king and the Tories." On a flying passage through London Landor was hospitably entertained by the friendly Robinson, who took him to see Flaxman one day, Charles Lamb another, and Coleridge a third. In his praise of Flaxman, the one living Englishman who shared, although not his scholarship, his natural affinity with the genius of Greece, Landor seemed to his companion wildly enthusiastic. With Lamb, whose life was then drawing to its close, and with his sister, Landor was no less delighted. Not so with Coleridge, although that philosopher put on a new suit of clothes in his honour, and made him as many pretty speeches as if he had been a young girl; but his talk was all about himself, and he displeased Landor by taking no notice of an enthusiastic mention of Southey. He next went to make at last the personal acquaintance of Julius Hare at Cambridge. It must have been at this time that Hare persuaded Landor to become a contributor to the *Philological Museum*, a periodical lately founded by himself and some other Cambridge scholars. In it Landor published in this year a selection of pieces in Latin verse, including that charming address to his eldest son, of which mention has already been made above (p. 10). Next year followed in the same journal one of the stateliest

and most diversified of Landor's classical dialogues, in which Scipio is found conversing with Panætius and Polybius beside the ruins of Carthage. The strength of Rome and the culture of Greece are celebrated with equal eloquence, and a tale, such as Landor loved, of perilously delightful converse between an elderly philosopher and a beautiful girl, is told in his peculiar vein of clear and captivating Greek grace, of ever appropriate but never foreseen or familiar imagery. Landor never long remembered any of his own writings after he had finished them, and it is to be regretted that he has weakened the originality of this admirable conversation by unconsciously introducing into it echoes and repetitions both from that of Epicurus and that of the two Ciceros.

From Cambridge Landor went to see his sisters at Warwick, and thence to stay with his benefactor Ablett, at his beautiful home of Llanbedr. The two friends went on together to pay flying visits to Southey and Wordsworth at the lakes. Upon Southey the renewal of personal converse with Landor left an impression altogether delightful; but in the intercourse of Landor with Wordsworth the seeds seem already to have been sown of that change of feeling on Landor's part which we shall have to notice by-and-by. For the present, however, their correspondence with and language concerning one another continued to be as cordial as ever. Towards the end of September Landor was back again in London. Immediately afterwards he set out on his way home, accompanied by Julius Hare and another companion from Cambridge. This was Mr. Worsley, the present master of Downing. The three travelled by Belgium and the field of Waterloo, "an ugly table for an ugly game," as Landor calls it, and then up the Rhine. At Bonn Landor met W. Schlegel, and the

aged poet and patriot Arndt. Of Schlegel he writes to Crabbe Robinson, "He resembles a little pot-bellied pony tricked out with stars, buckles, and ribbons, looking askance, from his ring and halter in the market, for an apple from one, a morsel of bread from another, a fig of ginger from a third, and a pat from everybody." His interview with the honest Arndt the next day had, however, "settled the bile this coxcomb of the bazaar had excited." In one of the very last pieces of verse Landor ever wrote I find him recalling with pleasure how he and Arndt had talked together in Latin thirty years before in the poet's orchard; how they had chanced to hear a song of Arndt's own sung by the people in the town below; and how nimbly the old poet had run and picked up an apple to give his guest, who had kept the pips and planted them in his garden at Fiesole. At Innsbrück Landor busied himself with seeking for memorials of the Tyrolese patriot Hofer, who had always been one of his favourite heroes. Travelling by the Tyrol to Venice, he sent home from that city for publication an account of what he had learnt, together with incidental observations on Waterloo and Napoleon, on liberty and Venice, which is one of his most striking pieces of high plain prose, at once impassioned and austere. By the beginning of 1833 Landor was back again among his children, his pet animals, and his pictures at Fiesole. He composed in memory of his visit to England three several odes; one to Ablett, in which he coupled Southey and Wordsworth together in the lines,

> "Live Derwent's guest! and thou by Grasmere springs!
> Serene creators of immortal things;"[1]

[1] The original version of this *Ode to Ablett* was published in Leigh

and the other two addressed respectively to Southey and Wordsworth themselves. These odes contain as high-pitched lyrical writing as Landor ever attempted. Each of them has its fine lines and its felicities, but none of them is felicitous or excellent all through. Landor is in this kind of writing singularly unequal, starting often with a fine thought and a noble musical movement, and flagging and halting within a few lines. The ode to Wordsworth begins with a well-turned confession of Landor's own comparative amateurship in the art of poetry; its central portion is somewhat obscure; afterwards it falls into the lighter critical or colloquial vein of verse in which Landor was generally happy, and ends with one of the neatest and at the same time noblest of compliments:

> "We both have run o'er half the space
> Listed for mortals' earthly race;
> We both have crost life's fervid line,
> And other stars before us shine:
> May they be bright and prosperous
> As those that have been stars for us!
> Our course by Milton's light was sped,
> And Shakspeare shining overhead:
> Chatting on deck was Dryden too,
> The Bacon of the rhyming crew;

Hunt's *London Journal*, December 3, 1834. The lines quoted in the text were preceded by others alluding to the death of Coleridge—

> "Coleridge hath loost his shoe, or bathes in bliss
> Among the spirits that have power like his."

In a revised version, sent a week or two later to Southey, these lines are changed to

> "Coleridge hath heard the call, and bathes in bliss
> Among the spirits that have powers like his."

Several alterations were made afterwards, and as the ode was next printed in 1837, the allusion to Coleridge had disappeared altogether.

None ever crost our mystic sea
More richly stored with thought than he;
Tho' never tender nor sublime,
He wrestles with and conquers Time.
To learn my lore on Chaucer's knee
I left much prouder company;
Thee gentle Spenser fondly led,
But me he mostly sent to bed.

"I wish them every joy above
That highly blessed spirits prove,
Save one: and that too shall be theirs,
But after many rolling years,
When 'mid their light thy light appears."

A far more faultless and more distinguished example of Landor's verse, and one not less characteristic than those last quoted of his warm and generous appreciation of the works and characters of his brother writers, is the elegiac address to Mary Lamb on the death of her brother, which he wrote immediately upon hearing the news of that death in 1834:

"Comfort thee, O thou mourner, yet awhile!
Again shall Elia's smile
Refresh thy heart, where heart can ache no more.
What is it we deplore?

"He leaves behind him, freed from griefs and years,
Far worthier things than tears.
The love of friends without a single foe:
Unequalled lot below!

"His gentle soul, his genius, these are thine;
For these dost thou repine?
He may have left the lowly walks of men;
Left them he has; what then?

"Are not his footsteps followed by the eyes
Of all the good and wise?
Tho' the warm day is over, yet they seek
Upon the lofty peak

"Of his pure mind the roseate light that glows
O'er death's perennial snows.
Behold him! from the region of the blest
He speaks: he bids thee rest."

Many months before this he had been much affected in thinking over the deaths and misfortunes of distinguished men which had been happening round about him in quick succession. "What a dismal gap," he writes to Robinson, "has been made within a little time in the forest of intellect, among the plants of highest growth!" Then, after enumerating the deaths of Byron, Scott, Goethe, and Coleridge, he alludes to Southey's misfortune in his wife's decay of mind, and ends, "It appears as if the world were cracking all about me, and leaving me no object on which to fix my eyes."

Nevertheless new friends of a younger generation were drawing one after another to Landor's side. In the year after his visit to England there came from Cambridge the scholar and poet to whom the lovers of Landor are indebted for the most living and skilful sketch which they possess of his career as a whole. I mean Lord Houghton, then Mr. Monckton Milnes and a recent pupil of Julius Hare, from whom he brought to Landor a letter of introduction. Being laid up with Florentine fever, Mr. Milnes was taken by Landor to Fiesole to recruit, and passed several weeks in his villa. He has written of Landor's affectionate reception, of his complimentary old-world manners, and of his elegant though simple hospitality; of his conversation, so affluent, animated, and coloured, so rich in

knowledge and illustration, so gay and yet so weighty, that it equalled, if not surpassed, all that has been related of the table-talk of men eminent for social speech; and last, not least, of his laughter, "so pantomimic, yet so genial, rising out of a momentary silence into peals so cumulative and sonorous, that all contradiction and possible affront was merged for ever."

Yet another pilgrim of these days was Emerson. Landor was one of the five distinguished men for the sake of seeing whom he had made his first pilgrimage to Europe. Through a common friend, the sculptor Greenough, Emerson received an invitation to dine at the Villa Gherardesca, and in his *English Traits*, published many years afterwards, had much to say concerning his host. "I found him noble and courteous, living in a cloud of pictures at his Villa Gherardesca, a fine house commanding a beautiful landscape. I had inferred from his books, or magnified from some anecdotes, an impression of Achillean wrath—an untameable petulance. I do not know whether the imputation were just or not, but certainly on this May day his courtesy veiled that haughty mind, and he was the most patient and gentle of hosts." Then follows a report of conversations held and opinions expressed at the villa, to some part of which, as we shall see, Landor felt called upon to take exception when it appeared. Another American guest, made not less welcome at the time, though he afterwards gave Landor occasion to repent his hospitality, was that most assiduous of flatterers and least delicate of gossips, N. P. Willis. With him Landor discussed the project of an American edition of the *Imaginary Conversations*, and the discussion reached so practical a point that Landor actually entrusted to him his own copy of the five volumes already published, interleaved and full of correc-

tions and additions, as well as his manuscript materials for a sixth. These Mr. Willis forthwith consigned to America, and having himself proceeded to England, lingered on in obsequious enjoyment of the great company among whom he found himself invited, and ceased to trouble himself any further about the business; nor was it until after much delay and annoyance that his neglected charge could be recovered from over seas. He had been more loyal in delivering to the hands to which it was addressed another volume in manuscript confided to him by Landor, that of the *Citation and Examination of William Shakspeare.* Of this Lady Blessington undertook, at Landor's request, to superintend the publication, and it appeared anonymously in the course of the year 1834.

The *Examination of Shakspeare* is the first of that trilogy of books, as it has been sometimes called, the composition of which occupied the chief part of Landor's strength during his life at Fiesole. Some years before, he had written to Southey that he was trembling at his own audacity in venturing to bring Shakspeare upon the scene. At that time he merely meditated a dialogue of the ordinary compass, but the dialogue had grown into a volume. What attracted Landor especially towards the episode of Shakspeare's trial at Charlecote for deer-stealing was his own familiarity with the scenery and associations of the place. In an earlier dialogue of Chaucer, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, he had represented Chaucer as telling a story (and an uncommonly dreary story too) concerning an imaginary ancestor of Sir Thomas Lucy. He now introduced that worthy magistrate himself, sitting in judgment in the hall of his house upon the youthful culprit from the neighbouring town. The account of the examination is supposed to be written by the magistrate's clerk, one Ephraim Barnett,

a kindly soul, who allows his own compassion for the prisoner to appear plainly enough in the course of his narrative. The accusers are two of Sir Thomas's keepers, and the accused finds a malicious enemy in the person of the family chaplain, Master Silas Gough, who is conceived as having views of his own in reference to Anne Hathaway. The knight himself is made to show gleams of sense and kindness through his grotesque family and personal vanity. He has pretensions, moreover, to the character of an oracle on matters poetical. After many courteous rejoinders and covert banterings addressed by the prisoner to the knight, and many discomfitures of Master Silas, with much discussion and quotation of poetry, and an energetic working out of the intrinsic irony of the situation, the scene is brought to a close by the sudden escape of the prisoner, who darts out of the hall before any one can lay hands upon him, and in a trice is seen galloping past reach of pursuit upon his father's sorrel mare.

This is the longest and most sustained attempt ever made by Landor at witty or humorous writing. One of the greatest of humorists, Charles Lamb, is reported to have said of the book, which appeared a few weeks before his death, that only two men could have written it, namely, the man who did write it, or he on whom it was written. This friendly formula was probably uttered with little meaning; but by Mr. Forster it has been taken in all seriousness. One of the earliest literary efforts of that zealous biographer himself was an enthusiastic review of the *Examination of Shakspeare* when it appeared; and in writing Landor's life five-and-thirty years later he showed himself as enthusiastic as ever. Mrs. Browning has expressed a similar opinion, but I think it is one few students are likely to share. Landor's natural style is almost

too weighty: his imitation of the seventeenth-century diction in this scene renders it even cumbrous. The imitative character of the prose is moreover quite out of keeping with the purely Landorian style of the verses with which the dialogue is interspersed. "Is there a man wise enough," wrote Landor once, "to know whether he himself is witty or not, to the extent he aims at? I doubt whether any question needs more self-examination. It is only the fool's heart that is at rest upon it." That Landor's own heart was not fully at rest on the question he shows by saying of the *Examination*, when he sent it off, "It is full of fun, I know not whether of wit." It is evident that Landor's ample, exaggerative, broadly ironical vein of fun needed, in order to commend it to others, the help of his own genial presence and exulting, irresistible laugh. As conveyed by his strong-backed, stately-paced written sentences, its effect is to oppress rather than to exhilarate: such at least is the feeling of the present writer. Witty, in a towering, substantial, solidly ingenious way, Landor unquestionably is; but tellingly or adroitly so he is not; the trick of lightness, grotesqueness, of airy or grim banter, of rapidity and flash, is not within the compass of his powers.

Cumbrous as may be its pace, loaded its wit, the *Examination* is nevertheless rich in original thought and invention, and in wise and tender sayings; and some of the verses scattered through it, particularly the piece called the *Maid's Lament*, are excellent. But, on the whole, it seems to me the nearest approach to an elaborate failure made by Landor in this form of writing. The personage of Shakspeare himself is certainly less successful than that of Sir Thomas Lucy. A single brief quotation may serve to show how energetically the author contrives to push his

own vein of irony, and at the same time of poetry, into the utterances of the didactic knight. Waiving a promised lecture to the prisoner on the meaning of the words "natural cause," Sir Thomas Lucy goes on:

"Thy mind being unprepared for higher cogitations, and the groundwork and religious duty not being well rammer-beaten and flinted, I do pass over this supererogatory point, and inform thee rather that bucks and swans and herons have something in their very names announcing them of knightly appurtenance. And (God forfend that evil do ensue therefrom!) that a goose on the common, or a game-cock on the loft of cottager or villager, may be seized, bagged, and abducted, with far less offence to the laws. In a buck there is something so gainly and so grand, he treadeth the earth with such ease and such agility, he abstaineth from all other animals with such punctilious avoidance, one would imagine God created him when He created knighthood. In the swan there is such purity, such coldness is there in the element he inhabiteth, such solitude of station, that verily he doth remind me of the Virgin Queen herself. Of the heron I have less to say, not having him about me; but I never heard his lordly croak without the conceit that it resembled a chancellor's or a primate's."

Following the *Examination of Shakspeare* in the same volume, and in a far happier vein, was a conversation, also feigned to have been preserved by the same scribe, Ephraim Barnett, between Essex and Spenser after the burning of the poet's house and of his children in Ireland. This is, indeed, one of the noblest of all Landor's dialogues of passion. Caring little for Spenser's poetry, he had always been interested in his *View of the State of Affairs in Ireland;* and Ireland in the wild days of the tithe rebellion, which was at its height when Landor wrote, was in the foreground of all men's thoughts. The beginning of the dialogue is political; Essex, who has just been charged with the settlement of the kingdom, questions Spenser

without at first noticing his anguish and perturbation. Then follows the famous passage in which the revelation of the poet's misfortunes is at length forced from him. The noble courtesy of Essex, and the tenderness and imaginative beauty of the attempts made by him to console his friend before he knows the full nature of the misfortune, are set in his finest contrast with the crushed despair of Spenser, his shrinking from the intolerable memories within him, and the spasm almost of madness with which those memories at last burst from his lips, yet without ever tearing or forcing the strong fabric of the language in which they are conveyed. This is the dialogue to which perhaps first of all the reader should turn who wishes to form an idea of Landor's peculiar dramatic power and dramatic method.

The second book planned, and in great part written, by Landor at Fiesole was on a Greek theme—*Pericles and Aspasia*—and filled two volumes. It is characteristic of the author that he chose for the treatment of this subject a form which no one else would have thought of, namely, the epistolary. He originally intended to introduce conversations as well, but in the end decided not to do so, and the book as it stands consists entirely of imaginary letters from Pericles to Aspasia, from Aspasia to Pericles, and from a few minor personages to each of them. The chief of these subordinate correspondents is Cleone, a friend and former companion of Aspasia at Miletus. Cleone is in love with a youth, Xeniades, who himself hopelessly loves Aspasia, and, following her to Athens, dies there. Famous personages of Greek history, as Anaxagoras and Alcibiades, take part also in the correspondence. It is made to begin with the arrival of Aspasia in Athens, and her first meeting with Pericles, which is represented as

taking place at a performance of the *Prometheus Bound* of Æschylus, and it ends with the death of Pericles during the plague of Athens and the occupation of the Athenian territory by the Spartans. Landor, as he used to say, loved walking upon the heights; he loved to think himself into fellow-citizenship with the greatest figures of the greatest ages of history; and he created for himself in *Pericles and Aspasia* an opportunity for pouring out all that he had imagined or reflected concerning the golden age of Greece. His sense of the glories of that age can best be realized by reading the language which he himself puts into the mouth of Pericles. Conscious of his approaching end, Pericles writes a farewell letter to Aspasia, whom he has sent into the country out of reach of contagion:

"It is right and orderly (he begins) that he who has partaken so largely in the prosperity of the Athenians, should close the procession of their calamities. The fever that has depopulated our city returned upon me last night, and Hippocrates and Acron tell me that my end is near.

"When we agreed, O Aspasia, in the beginning of our loves, to communicate our thoughts by writing, even while we were both in Athens, and when we had many reasons for it, we little foresaw the more powerful one that has rendered it necessary of late. We never can meet again. The laws forbid it, and love itself enforces them. Let wisdom be heard by you as imperturbably, and affection as authoritatively, as ever; and remember that the sorrow of Pericles can arise but from the bosom of Aspasia. There is only one word of tenderness we could say, which we have not said oftentimes before, and there is no consolation in it. The happy never say, and never hear said, farewell."

Then, in a strain at once of composed resignation and exulting retrospect, and in language beneath the austere simplicity of which there throbs the pulse of a passionate

emotion, he proceeds to recount the glorious memories of his life:

"And now (he concludes) at the close of my day, when every light is dim, and every guest departed, let me own that these wane before me, remembering, as I do, in the pride and fulness of my heart, that Athens confided her glory, and Aspasia her happiness, to me.

"Have I been a faithful guardian? Do I resign them to the custody of the gods undiminished and unimpaired? Welcome, then, welcome, my last hour! After enjoying for so great a number of years, in my public and private life, what I believe has never been the lot of any other, I now extend my hand to the urn, and take without reluctance or hesitation what is the lot of all."

The technical scholar, it is true, will find in *Pericles and Aspasia* improbabilities and anachronisms enough; for Landor wrote as usual out of his head, and without renewing his acquaintance with authorities for his special purpose; and his knowledge, astonishing from any other point of view, was from that of technical scholarship incomplete. He did not trouble himself about considerations of this kind, observing rightly enough that Dialogue was not History, and that in a work of imagination some liberties might legitimately be taken with fact. Only, then, he should have been careful not to quit that sphere of thought and feeling where imagination is lawfully paramount; not to lay aside, as he too often does, the tone of the literary artist for that of the critical and historical inquirer. *Pericles and Aspasia*, like some of the classical *Conversations*, has the misfortune of being weighted with disquisitions too learned for the general reader, and not sound enough for the special student. But for this drawback, the book is throughout in Landor's best manner. It is full of variety and invention; we pass from the performance of *Prometheus* before the assembled Athenians

to Aspasia's account of the dawn of love between herself and Pericles, and of the fascination and forwardness of the boy Alcibiades, to letters which reveal the love-frenzy of the unhappy Xeniades; then to others containing criticisms, accompanied by imaginary specimens, of various greater or minor Greek poets; and thence to original exercises in poetry by the correspondents themselves. One of these, the fragment attempted, we are asked to believe, by Aspasia, on the re-union of Agamemnon and Iphigenia among the shades, Landor always accounted his best piece of dramatic writing in verse. In later editions there are added in this place other scenes exhibiting the vengeance of Orestes, and illustrating the proud and well-founded confidence of originality with which Landor was accustomed to approach anew themes already handled, even by the greatest of masters. Besides all this, we have speeches of Pericles on the death of Cimon, the war of Samos, the defection of Megara and of Eubœa, and the policy of Athens against Sparta; speeches brief, compressed, stately, uniting with a careful avoidance of the examples to be found in Thucydides a still more careful observance of the precept, "There is so very much *not* to say." We have the scene in which Aspasia is accused before the assembly, and Pericles defends her. Towards the close of the correspondence we find reflected in it the shadows of war, pestilence, and calamity. Finally, after the death of Pericles, there are added two letters in which Alcibiades tells Aspasia how he died, and how Cleone, arriving at the house of mourning from Miletus, was seized by infection on the threshold, and staggering towards the garden where Xeniades lay buried, died clasping the tomb of him she had loved in vain.

In all this the strength, conciseness, and harmony of

Landor's English style are at their height. The verses in the book are again very unequal; its prose is exemplary and delightful. The properly dramatic parts, the ebb and flow of feeling between Pericles and Aspasia, and between Cleone and Xeniades, are often touched with Landor's utmost, that is, as we have said, with an all but Shakspearian subtlety and justice of insight. The reflective parts are full of sayings as new as they are wise, often illustrated and enforced with images of singular beauty. The spirit of beauty, indeed, reigns, as it reigns in hardly any other modern writing, over the thoughts and language of the characters, and the two volumes are perhaps the richest mine which English prose literature contains of noble and unused quotations.

As if the body of his book were not full enough, Landor must needs append to it two close-packed epilogues written in his own name. One was political, nominally on the Athenian government, but really full of his ideas on modern and especially English politics, on the disestablishment of the Irish Church, the reform of the House of Lords, and of the episcopacy; the other literary, containing many of those arguments on language and orthography, intended for insertion in the *Conversations*, of which Landor's original draft had for the present disappeared through the carelessness of Mr. N. P. Willis. That gentleman had in the meantime not a little scandalized his acquaintances in England by the book in which he had narrated his experiences. To this publication, and to his own loss, Landor alludes as follows: "I never look for anything, but I should add disappointment and some degree of inquietude to the loss. I regret the appearance of his book more than the disappearance of mine. . . . Greatly as I have been flattered by the visits of American

gentlemen, I hope that for the future no penciller of similar compositions will deviate in my favour to the right hand of the road from Florence to Fiesole. In case of mistake, there is a charming view of the two cities, and of Valdarno and Vallombrosa, from the iron gate at the entrance of my grounds: I could not point out a more advantageous position."

Landor had by this time learnt not to imperil his equanimity by personal dealings with publishers. Mr. G. P. R. James undertook the arrangements for *Pericles and Aspasia*, as Lady Blessington had undertaken those for the *Examination of Shakspeare*. The book was received with delight by a distinguished few, but ignored by the general public. The publisher lost money by it, and Landor, without a word of complaint, insisted on making good the loss. He, in like manner, paid instead of receiving money for the publication of his next book, the *Pentameron and Pentalogia*. The *Pentameron* is a series of dialogues, connected by a slender thread of narrative, and supposed to have been held on five successive days between Petrarch and Boccaccio, in Boccaccio's villa of Certaldo, during his recovery from an illness and not long before his death. The *Pentalogia*, which follows, is a series of five miscellaneous dramatic scenes entirely independent of the *Pentameron*, and conceived in just the same vein as the shorter dramatic imaginary conversations, only written in blank verse instead of prose. Two of these are from the story of Orestes, and are incorporated in the later editions of *Pericles and Aspasia;* the others are between Essex and Bacon; the Parents of Luther; and William Rufus and Tyrrell; the latter a piece of great vigour and spirit.

In the *Pentameron* Landor is again at his very best. All his study of the great Italian writers of the fourteenth

century, and all his recent observations of Tuscan scenery and Tuscan character, are turned to skilful and harmonious account. Landor loved and understood Boccaccio through and through: and if he over-estimated that prolific and amiable genius in comparison with other and greater men, it was an error which for the present purpose was almost an advantage. Nothing can be pleasanter than the intercourse of the two friendly poets as Landor had imagined it; nothing more classically idyllic than the incidental episodes. Even the humour of the piece is successful, in all at least that has to do with the characters of the sly parish priest, the pretty and shrewd servant maid Assuntina, and her bashful lover. True, there occur one or two heavy stories, heavily and ineffectively told. And many lovers of Dante may be shocked at the unsympathetic criticism of that poet which fills a large part of each day's conversation. This is in part consonant with the opinions ascribed traditionally to Petrarch, and in part represents Landor's private judgment. He held Dante to be one of the very greatest of all poets, but thought he showed his true greatness only at rare intervals. Recognizing in poetry, as in history, the part due to the individual alone, Landor holds Dante personally responsible for all those qualities which were imprinted on him by his element and his age. Instead of perceiving in him, as Carlyle taught the next generation of students to perceive, the "voice" of all the Catholic centuries, the incarnation of the spirit of the Middle Age and of Florence, Landor acknowledged in him only a man of extraordinary genius, who had indulged in the *Inferno* in a great deal of vindictive ferocity, and in the *Paradiso* of barren theological mysticism. Having no sympathy for the Gothic in literature, that is to say, for the fantastic, the unreason-

able, and the grim, Landor collects for superfluous and somewhat tedious reprobation examples of these qualities from Dante. He asserts an extravagant disproportion between the good and the bad parts of his work, and fails to do justice even to that unmatched power which Dante exhibits in every page, and which Landor himself shared with him in a remarkable degree, of striking out a visible image in words sudden, massive, and decisive. But all this and more may be forgiven Landor for the sake of such criticism as he devotes to those parts of Dante which he does admire. On the episode of Piero and Francesca he has put into the mouth of Boccaccio the following comments:

"*Petrarca.* The thirty lines from *Ed io senti* are unequalled by any other continuous thirty in the whole dominions of poetry.

Boccaccio. Give me rather the six on Francesca: for if in the former I find the simple, vigorous, clear narration, I find also what I would not wish, the features of Ugolino reflected full in Dante. The two characters are similar in themselves; hard, cruel, inflexible, malignant, but, whenever moved, moved powerfully. In Francesca, with the faculty of divine spirits, he leaves his own nature (not, indeed, the exact representative of theirs), and converts all his strength into tenderness. The great poet, like the original man of the Platonists, is double, possessing the further advantage of being able to drop one half at his option, and to resume it. Some of the tenderest on paper have no sympathies beyond; and some of the austerest in their intercourse with their fellow-creatures, have deluged the world with tears. It is not from the rose that the bee gathers honey, but often from the most acrid and most bitter leaves and petals.

'Quando leggemmo il disiato riso
Esser baciato di cotanto amante,
Questi, che mai da me non fia diviso!
La bocca mi baciò tutto tremante . . .
Galeotto fù il libro, e chi lo scrisse . . .
Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante.'

In the midst of her punishment, Francesca, when she comes to the tenderest part of her story, tells it with complacency and delight; and, instead of naming Paolo, which indeed she never has done from the beginning, she now designates him as

'Questi, che mai da me non fia diviso!'

Are we not impelled to join in her prayer, wishing them happier in their union?

Petrarca. If there be no sin in it.

Boccaccio. Ay, and even if there be . . . God help us! What a sweet aspiration in each cesura of the verse! three love-sighs fixt and incorporate! Then, when she hath said

'La bocca mi baciò tutto tremante,'

she stops: she would avert the eyes of Dante from her: he looks for the sequel: she thinks he looks severely: she says, '*Galeotto* is the name of the book,' fancying by this timorous little flight she has drawn him far enough from the nest of her young loves. No, the eagle beak of Dante and his piercing eyes are yet over her. '*Galeotto* is the name of the book.' 'What matters that?' 'And of the writer.' 'Or that either?' At last she disarms him; but how? '*That* day we read no more.' Such a depth of intuitive judgment, such a delicacy of perception, exists not in any other work of human genius."

It is a part of Landor's own delicacy in handling the passage that he postpones until another time the mention of its one flaw, namely, the fact that *Galeotto* is really an equivalent for *Pandarus*. Next to this example of what Landor could do in criticism, let us take, also from the *Pentameron*, an example of what he could do in allegory. This was a form of composition for which Landor had in general some contempt, especially when, as by Spenser, it was used as a foundation more or less shifting and dubious for an independent structure of romance. But the direct and unambiguous use of allegory in illustration of human life and experience he thought occasion-

ally permissible, and no one except the object of his aversion, Plato, has used it as well. Petrarch's allegory, or rather dream, in the *Pentameron*, is of love, sleep, and death. It is an example unmatched, as I think, in literature, of the union of Greek purity of outline with Florentine poignancy of sentiment. The oftener we read it, the more strongly it attracts and holds us by the treble charm of its quiet, sober cadences, its luminous imagery, and its deep, consolatory wisdom. The thoughts and feelings concerning life and the issues of life, which it translates into allegorical shape, will be found to yield more and more meaning the closer they are grasped:

"I had reflected for some time on this subject (the use and misuse of allegory, says Petrarch), when, wearied with the length of my walk over the mountains, and finding a soft old mole-hill covered with grey grass by the wayside, I laid my head upon it and slept. I cannot tell how long it was before a species of dream or vision came over me.

"Two beautiful youths appeared beside me; each was winged; but the wings were hanging down, and seemed ill adapted to flight. One of them, whose voice was the softest I ever heard, looking at me frequently, said to the other, 'He is under my guardianship for the present; do not awaken him with that feather.' Methought, on hearing the whisper, I saw something like the feather of an arrow, and then the arrow itself—the whole of it, even to the point—although he carried it in such a manner that it was difficult at first to discover more than a palm's length of it; the rest of the shaft (and the whole of the barb) was behind his ancles.

"'This feather never awakens any one,' replied he, rather petulantly, 'but it brings more of confident security, and more of cherished dreams than you, without me, are capable of imparting.'

"'Be it so,' answered the gentler, 'none is less inclined to quarrel or dispute than I am. Many whom you have wounded grievously call upon me for succour, but so little am I disposed to thwart you it is seldom I venture to do more for them than to whisper a few words of comfort in passing. How many reproaches on these occasions

have been cast upon me for indifference and infidelity! Nearly as many, and nearly in the same terms as upon you.'

"'Odd enough that we, O Sleep! should be thought so alike,' said Love, contemptuously. 'Yonder is he who bears a nearer resemblance to you; the dullest have observed it.'

"I fancied I turned my eyes to where he was pointing, and saw at a distance the figure he designated. Meanwhile the contention went on uninterruptedly. Sleep was slow in asserting his power or his benefits. Love recapitulated them, but only that he might assert his own above them. Suddenly he called on me to decide, and to choose my patron. Under the influence, first of the one, then of the other, I sprang from repose to rapture; I alighted from rapture on repose, and knew not which was sweetest. Love was very angry with me, and declared he would cross me throughout the whole of my existence. Whatever I might on other occasions have thought of his veracity, I now felt too surely the conviction that he would keep his word. At last, before the close of the altercation, the third genius had advanced, and stood near us. I cannot tell how I knew him, but I knew him to be the genius of Death. Breathless as I was at beholding him, I soon became familiar with his features. First they seemed only calm; presently they became contemplative, and lastly, beautiful; those of the Graces themselves are less regular, less harmonious, less composed. Love glanced at him unsteadily, with a countenance in which there was somewhat of anxiety, somewhat of disdain, and cried, 'Go away! go away! Nothing that thou touchest lives.'

"'Say rather, child,' replied the advancing form, and advancing grew loftier and statelier, 'say rather that nothing of beautiful or of glorious lives its own true life until my wing hath passed over it.'

"Love pouted, and rumpled and bent down with his forefinger the stiff short feathers on his arrow-head, but replied not. Although he frowned worse than ever, and at me, I dreaded him less and less, and scarcely looked toward him. The milder and calmer genius, the third, in proportion as I took courage to contemplate him, regarded me with more and more complacency. He held neither flower nor arrow, as the others did; but throwing back the clusters of dark curls that overshadowed his countenance, he presented to me his hand, openly and benignly. I shrank on looking at him so near, and yet I sighed to love him. He smiled, not without an expression of pity, at

perceiving my diffidence, my timidity; for I remembered how soft was the hand of Sleep, how warm and entrancing was Love's. By degrees I grew ashamed of my ingratitude, and turning my face away, I held out my arms and felt my neck within his. Composure allayed all the throbbings of my bosom, the coolness of freshest morning breathed around, the heavens seemed to open above me, while the beautiful cheek of my deliverer rested on my head. I would now have looked for those others, but, knowing my intention by my gesture, he said, consolatorily—

"'Sleep is on his way to the earth, where many are calling him, but it is not to them he hastens; for every call only makes him fly further off. Sedately and gravely as he looks, he is nearly as capricious and volatile as the more arrogant and ferocious one.'

"'And Love,' said I, 'whither is he departed? If not too late, I would propitiate and appease him.'

"'He who cannot follow me, he who cannot overtake and pass me,' said the genius, 'is unworthy of the name, the most glorious in earth or heaven. Look up! Love is yonder, and ready to receive thee.'

"I looked; the earth was under me; I saw only the clear blue sky, and something brighter above it."

The *Pentameron* bears on its title-page the date 1837. Before the book appeared a great change had come over Landor's life. He had said farewell to his beautiful home at Fiesole; had turned his back upon his children; uprooted himself from all his household pleasures and occupations; and come back to live alone in England. In a poem introduced into the *Pentameron* itself, in which those pleasures and occupations are more fully described than in any other of his writings, he looks upon them already as things of the past. The piece is nominally quoted by Boccaccio as the work of an Italian gentleman forced to leave his country; it is really an address written by Landor from England to his youngest son "Carlino."

To this second disruption of his home Landor had been

forced by renewed dissensions with his wife. The Fiesolan household had, in truth, been below the surface no harmonious or well-ordered one. A husband absorbed in his own imaginings, a wife more ready to make herself agreeable to any one else than to her husband, children devotedly loved, but none the less allowed to run wild, here were of themselves elements enough of domestic shipwreck. Add to this that Landor's own occasional bursts of passion would seem to have met more than their match in Mrs. Landor's persistent petulance of opposition. The immediate cause of his departure he himself, and at least one friendly witness, alleged to have been the language repeatedly, and in the face of all remonstrances, addressed to him by his wife in presence of the children. This Landor had felt to be alike demoralizing to them and humiliating to himself, and had determined to endure it no longer. He left his home in the spring of 1835; spent the summer by himself at the baths of Lucca; reached England early in the autumn, stayed for three months with his friend Ablett at Llanbedr, and then went for the winter to Clifton. Next year he was for a long time again at Llanbedr, after which he stayed for a while in London, renewing old friendships and forming new. In the meantime friends of both sides of the house had been endeavouring to bring about some kind of arrangement between the husband and wife. In the interests of the children, over whom Mrs. Landor confessed that she had no control, it was proposed that while they and she should continue to live together, whether in England or abroad, Landor should establish himself, if not under the same roof, at any rate close by. At one time it was settled that the children should come to meet their father in Germany, and with that view Landor travelled to Heidelberg in

September, 1836. But they never came, nor were any of the other proposed arrangements in the end found practicable. Landor's children remained with their mother at Fiesole; letters and presents continued to be exchanged between them and their father; twice or thrice in the coming years they came to visit him in England; but they were practically lost to him henceforward. With his wife's relations living in this country he continued to be on perfectly cordial terms. The winter of 1836–'37 he passed, like the last, at Clifton, where he and Southey, whose health and strength began about this time to fail, once more enjoyed the happiness of each other's society. From Clifton Landor went again, as on the previous year, first to stay with Ablett at Llanbedr, and then with Lady Blessington, now widowed, in London. The rest of the summer having been spent in visits at Torquay and Plymouth, he finally settled down, in October, 1837, at Bath; and from this date a new period in his life begins.

The two years between Landor's departure from Fiesole and his establishment at Bath had not been idly spent. The last touches had been added to *Pericles and Aspasia*, and a good deal of the *Pentameron* had been for the first time written, either at the Baths of Lucca or afterwards in England. Other minor publications had quickly followed. First an Irish squib in verse, of which the less said the better, directed against the morality of the priesthood, and entitled *Terry Hogan*. Next a political pamphlet in the form of letters addressed to Lord Melbourne, and called *Letters of a Conservative*. The particular point to which these letters is directed is the remedy of episcopal abuses in Wales; but they contain much political and personal matter of interest besides. For one thing they inform us of, what students of Landor seem hitherto to

have overlooked, the precise shape which his long-cherished project of a history of his own times had latterly assumed, and of the end to which it had come:

"It is known to many distinguished men, literary and political, of both parties, that I have long been occupied in writing a work, which I thought to entitle *The Letters of a Conservative*. In these I attempted to trace and to expose the faults and fallacies of every administration, from the beginning of the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. I was born at the opening of that year; and many have been my opportunities of conversing, at home and abroad, with those who partook in the events that followed it. . . . I threw these papers into the fire; no record of them is existing."

Landor's reason for destroying his work had been the creditable one that its reprehension of some living statesmen had come to him to seem more strong than was desirable to publish. In the course of the far narrower argument to which his present *Letters* are directed, Landor finds occasion for these extremely characteristic observations on the national and religious characteristics of the Welsh, to whom, after his prolonged visits at Llanbedr, he feels more kindly now than of yore, in comparison with those of the Irish:

"In the Irish we see the fire and vivacity of a southern people: their language, their religion, every thought is full of images. They have been, and ever must be, idolaters. Do not let their good clergy be angry with me for the expression. I mean no harm by it. Firmly do I believe that the Almighty is too merciful and too wise for anger or displeasure at it. Would one of these kind-hearted priests be surly at being taken for another? Certainly not: and quite as certainly the Maker of mankind will graciously accept their gratitude, whether the offering be laid in the temple or on the turf, whether in the enthusiasm of the heart, before a beautiful image, expressing love and benignity, or, without any visible object, in the bleak and desert air.

"The Welshman is serious, concentrated, and morose; easily offended, not easily appeased; strongly excited by religious zeal; but there is melancholy in the musick of his mind. Cimmerian gloom is hanging still about his character; and his God is the God of the mountain and the storm."

One more equally characteristic quotation, and we may close the *Letters of a Conservative.*

"The Bishop of London groaned at an apparition in Ireland: and a horrible one it was indeed. A clergyman was compelled by the severity of Fortune, or, more Christianly speaking, by the wiles and maliciousness of Satan, to see his son work in his garden.

"Had the right reverend baron passed my house, early in the morning, or late in the evening, the chances are that he would have found me doing the same thing, and oftentimes more unprofitably; that is, planting trees from which some other will gather the fruit. Would his mitred head have turned giddy to see me on a ladder, pruning or grafting my peaches? I should have been sorry for it, not being used to come down until my work was over, even when visitors no less illustrious than the right reverend baron have called on me. But we have talked together in our relative stations; I above, they below."

Besides this, Landor contributed in 1837 to Leigh Hunt's *Monthly Repository* a series of dialogues and letters called *High and Low Life in Italy*, which are good in proportion to their gravity; the majority, being facetious, are somewhat forced and dreary. A rare volume, and one much cherished by the lovers of Landor, is that which Mr. Ablett printed for private distribution in this same year 1837. It contains a lithograph from Count D'Orsay's profile of Landor drawn in 1825; a dedication or inscription two pages long, and in the most mincingly ceremonious vein, to Mrs. Ablett by her husband, and a selection from the *Conversations* and other fugitive pieces which

Landor had contributed to various periodicals since his visit to England five years before; besides some extracts from Leigh Hunt, and one or two effusions which appear to be Mr. Ablett's own.

Lastly, Landor printed, still in the autumn of 1837, a pamphlet in rhyming couplets which he called *A Satire on Satirists, and Admonition to Detractors.* This is an attempt in a manner of writing which he had abandoned since boyhood. Landor had allowed himself for once to be irritated by a review; an attack, namely, on his scholarship (accompanied, it should be said, with general criticisms of a laudatory kind), which had appeared in *Blackwood.* He now indulged, clumsily it must be confessed, in the somewhat stale entertainment of baiting Scotch reviewers. The only things which make the *Satire* noteworthy are the lines in which Landor alludes to his own scene of Agamemnon and Iphigenia—

> "Far from the footstool of the tragic throne,
> I am tragedian in this scene alone"—

and the passages in which he allows himself to turn against the old object of his respect and admiration, Wordsworth. He had been letting certain remarks uttered by or attributed to Wordsworth rankle in his mind. He had begun to discover, during his visit in 1832, the narrow intellectual sympathies of that great poet, and his indifference to the merits of nearly all poetry except his own. Now again, in the summer of 1837, Landor had seen or imagined Wordsworth cold, while every one else was enthusiastic, when they were present together at the first night of Talfourd's *Ion.* Lastly, it had been related to him that Wordsworth had said he would not give five shillings a ream for the poetry of Southey. Never in the

least degree jealous on his own account, Landor was intensely so on account of his friend, and forgetting the life-long intimacy and regard of Wordsworth and Southey, thought proper to call the former to account as a "Detractor." The lines in which he does so are not good; they hit what was to some extent really a blot in Wordsworth's nature; but they had much better never have been written; and we think with regret of the old phrases of regard—"*vir*, *civis*, *philosophe*, *poeta*, *præstantissime*," and "When 'mid their light thy light appears." Wordsworth, to whose notice the attack was only brought some time after it appeared, was little ruffled by it. Neither was Landor, on his part, when Crabbe Robinson strongly remonstrated with him on his *Satire*, the least offended. Among other things, Landor had referred to his own lines on the Shell, from *Gebir*, as being "the bar from which Wordsworth drew his wire" in a nearly analogous passage of the *Excursion*. Wordsworth denied any conscious imitation. It may at this point not be without interest to compare Landor's original lines, the best known in all his poetry, with those in which they were thus echoed by his brother poets, accidentally, it seems, by Wordsworth, and avowedly by Byron. In the original it is the sea-nymph who proposes the shell as an appropriate forfeit to be paid by her to Tamar if he beats her in wrestling:

> "But I have sinuous shells of pearly hue
> Within, and they that lustre have imbibed
> In the Sun's palace-porch, where, when unyoked,
> His chariot-wheel stands midway in the wave;
> Shake one, and it awakens; then apply
> Its polisht lip to your attentive ear,
> And it remembers its august abodes,
> And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there."

Byron's lines in *The Island* compare the subdued sound of the sea at sunset with that to be heard in the shell; and it is of a piece with his usual swinging carelessness that the "murmurer" of one line is made to "rave," three lines further on,

> "The Ocean scarce spoke louder with his swell
> Than breathes his mimic murmurer in the shell,
> As, far divided from his parent deep,
> The sea-born infant cries, and will not sleep,
> Raising his little plaint in vain, to rave
> For the broad bosom of his nursing wave."

Wordsworth turns the phenomenon to account for the purposes of a fine metaphysical and didactic metaphor, describing it at the same time in lines which, compared with any of those in the passage from *Gebir* except the fourth and fifth, are somewhat lumbering and diluted. The shell, Landor said, had in this version lóst its pearly hue within, and its memory of where it had abided.

> "I have seen
> A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract
> Of inland ground, applying to his ear
> The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell;
> To which, in silence hush'd, his very soul
> Listen'd intensely; and his countenance soon
> Brighten'd with joy; for murmurings from within
> Were heard, sonorous cadences! whereby,
> To his belief, the monitor express'd
> Mysterious union with its native sea.
> Even such a Shell the universe itself
> Is to the ear of faith."

In Landor's general criticisms on Wordsworth's poetry, from this time forward, there is perceptible less change of tone than in those on his person. The great achievement of Wordsworth, his poetical revelation of a sympathy, more

close and binding than had ever before been expressed in words, between the hearts of nature and of man, had in it too much of the metaphysical for Landor at any time fully to appreciate. But now, as formerly, Wordsworth remained for Landor a fine poet, although marred by puerility and dulness; the best of all poets of country life; the author of the best sonnets, after one or two of Milton, in the language; and, in his *Laodamia*, of at least one poem classical both in thought and expression.

CHAPTER VII.

LIFE AT BATH—DRAMAS—HELLENICS—LAST FRUIT—DRY STICKS.

[1837—1858.]

During the two unsettled years that followed his return to England, Landor, as we have seen, continued to write as industriously as ever. Neither is there perceptible in the works so produced the shadow of any severe inward struggle or distress. Did Landor then really, we cannot help asking ourselves, feel very deeply the breaking up of his beautiful Italian home or not? A few years before he could not bear his children to be out of his sight even for a day; did he suffer as we should have expected him to suffer at his total separation from them now?

The poem of which mention has been made in the last chapter treats of their pleasures and occupations at the Villa Gherardesca in a tone of affectionate, but by no means inconsolable, regret. Another retrospective piece, written at Torquay in 1837, touches on the same matters in a still lighter strain. A brief and probably somewhat earlier *Farewell to Italy*, in blank verse, is a good deal graver in its tone; but the only instance, except once or twice in his letters, in which Landor writes of his changed life in a strain at all approaching despondency, is in the following set of verses composed on one of his birthdays;

verses which happen also to be among his best; classically simple and straightforward in thought and diction, and in cadence unusually full and solemn:

"The day returns, my natal day,
Borne on the storm and pale with snow,
And seems to ask me why I stay,
Stricken by Time and bow'd by Woe.

"Many were once the friends who came
To wish me joy; and there are some
Who wish it now; but not the same;
They are whence friends can never come;

"Nor are they you my love watcht o'er
Cradled in innocence and sleep;
You smile into my eyes no more,
Nor see the bitter tears they weep."

The same question which we have thus been led to ask ourselves as to the depth or lack of depth in Landor's private and domestic feelings, seems to have been addressed to him in person by some friend about this time. Here is his reply:

"So, then, I feel not deeply! if I did,
I should have seized the pen and pierced therewith
The passive world!
And thus thou reasonest?
Well hast thou known the lover's, not so well
The poet's heart: while that heart bleeds, the hand
Presses it close. Grief must run on and pass
Into near Memory's more quiet shade
Before it can compose itself in song.
He who is agonized and turns to show
His agony to those who sit around,
Seizes the pen in vain: thought, fancy, power,
Rush back into his bosom; all the strength

> Of genius cannot draw them into light
> From under mastering Grief; but Memory,
> The Muse's mother, nurses, rears them up,
> Informs, and keeps them with her all her days."

As a critical reflexion of general application, there is justice in the thought here expressed with so much gracefulness and precision; but as solving the point raised in relation to Landor's own character, the answer can hardly be taken as sufficient. We must remember on the one hand that his principles, both in life and literature, tended towards the suppression and control of emotion rather than towards its indulgence and display. In life his ambition was to walk "with Epicurus on the right hand and Epictetus on the left:" in literature, to attain the balance and self-governance of the Greeks. For the former effort Landor's character unfitted him; his temperament was too strong for his philosophy; in the latter effort he succeeded, and a part of the peculiar quality of his writing proceeds from its expression of the most impetuous feelings and judgments in a style of classical sobriety and reserve. But stormy as was Landor's nature upon the surface, we may still doubt whether its depths were ever so strongly moved by the things of real life as by the things of imagination. The bitterest tears he shed would seem by his own confession to have been those which were drawn from him, not by the sorrows and estrangements of his own experience, but by moving passages of literature, and the misfortunes of old-world heroines and heroes. "Most things," he writes to Lady Blessington, "are real to me except realities." The realities, moreover, which did affect him were chiefly the realities of to-day, and not those of yesterday or to-morrow. A wrench once made, a tie once broken, he could accommodate himself without too much suffering

to the change. Neither the sense of continuity nor the sense of responsibility in human relations seems to have been practically very strong in him. The injury done to his children by leaving them subject to no discipline at such an age and in such surroundings, would appear hardly to have weighed on Landor's mind at all, and that it failed to do so is, I think, the most serious blot upon his character.

His own answer would have been that to separate the children from their mother would have been cruel, and to let them continue witnesses of her altercations with himself, impossible. The visits which as they grew up they came at long intervals to pay him in England, were at first ardently anticipated, but failed to lead to any relations of close or lasting sympathy. In all that concerned their material welfare, he had in the meanwhile shown himself as unreservedly generous as ever. Landor's estates of Llanthony and Ipsley were yielding at this time upwards of three thousand pounds a year, of which mortgages and insurances absorbed every year about fourteen hundred. Out of the remaining sixteen hundred a year he had been in the habit, during his life at Ipsley, of spending altogether not much over six, allowing the balance to accumulate for the benefit of his younger children. When he left Fiesole, he dispossessed himself, in the interest of his eldest son Arnold, of his property in the villa, with its farms and gardens, which of themselves were almost sufficient for the support of the family. At the same time he made over to Mrs. Landor two-thirds of the income which he had been accustomed to spend while they were all under one roof, reserving to himself the other third only, that is about two hundred pounds a year. Finding this after a year or two's experience in England insufficient, he allowed him-

self as much more out of the share hitherto suffered to accumulate for the younger children, making four hundred pounds a year in all. On this income Landor lived, and was perfectly content to live, in the solitary home which he had by this time made for himself in a Bath lodging.

His solitude was not morose or devoid of consolations. In Bath itself he found friends after his own heart, and first among them Colonel, afterwards Sir William, Napier, the historian of the Peninsular War, with whom for years it was Landor's habit to spend a part of almost every day. He enjoyed, moreover, the tender regard and devotion of his wife's niece, Teresita Stopford, afterwards Lady Charles Beauclerk, as well as of another young lady, Rose Paynter, now Lady Sawle, a connexion of the Aylmer family, whose name and lineage revived old days and old affections in his mind. He was accustomed during the earlier part of his Bath life to pay visits nearly every year to a certain number of chosen friends, and most regularly of all to Lady Blessington. Throughout the long strain and fever of her brilliant, irregular social career at Gore House, beset by cares and crowds, and hard pressed by the consequences of her own and D'Orsay's profusion, this lady never lost the warmth and constancy of heart which so rarely accompany promiscuous hospitality, yet without which hospitality is but dust and ashes. She taught Landor to regard Gore House as a kind of second home, and he came to entertain quite a tender feeling for the room which was always kept for him there, and especially for a certain lilac and a certain laurel that used to come into blossom about the time of his yearly visit. At Gore House he made, and from time to time refreshed, an acquaintance with many of the most distinguished men of the then rising generation. His closest friends of that generation were Forster and Dick-

ens, who attached themselves to him, the former especially, with an enthusiastic warmth of admiration and regard. Besides Lady Blessington, we find Landor in the habit of paying visits to his old friend Kenyon at Wimbledon, to Julius Hare, now installed as archdeacon at the family living of Hurstmonceaux, to Ablett in Wales, to Lord Nugent near Aylesbury, to Sir William Molesworth at Pencarrow, to his brother Robert in his beautiful rectory at Birlingham, to his sisters at Warwick, and to his wife's sisters at Richmond.

Wherever Landor went he made the same impression, which was that of a king and a lion among men. In appearance he had gained greatly with age. As sturdy and as florid as ever, he was now in addition beautifully venerable. His bold and keen grey eyes retained all their power, his teeth remained perfectly strong and white, but his forehead had become bald and singularly imposing, high-vaulted, broad and full beneath its thick white fringe of backward-flowing hair. Every man's face, as has been truly said, is in great part his own making; and the characters which time had imprinted on Landor's were not those of his transient bursts of fury, but those of his habitual moods of lofty thought and tender feeling. All the lines of his countenance were large and, except when the fit was upon him, full of benignity, his smile especially being of an inexpressible sweetness. His movements were correspondingly massive, but at the same time clumsy; not, of course, with the clumsiness of ill-breeding, but rather with that of aimlessness and inefficiency. The physical signs of the unpractical man were indeed all of them written upon Landor. He had short arms, with constrained movements of the elbows, and even when his fists were clenched in wrath there was a noticeable relaxation

about the thumbs, a thing never yet seen to accompany tenacity of practical will or tact in practical dealings. He would put his spectacles up over his forehead, and after oversetting everything in the wildest search for them, submit himself with desperate resignation to their loss. In travelling he would give himself worlds of trouble to remember the key of his portmanteau, but utterly forget the portmanteau itself; and when he discovered that he had lost it, he would launch out into an appalling picture of the treachery and depravity of the railway officials concerned, and of their fathers and grandfathers to the remotest generation. Next, after a moment's silence, the humourous view of the case would present itself to him, and he would begin to laugh, quietly at first, and then in louder and ever louder volleys, until the room shook again, and the commotion seemed as if it would never stop. These tempests of hilarity seemed to some of Landor's friends almost as formidable as the tempests of anger to which he continued to be subject at the suspicion of a contradiction or a slight. But both were well worth undergoing for the sake of such noble and winning company as was that of Landor in his ordinary moods. Then not only was his talk incomparably rich and full, it was delivered with such a courtly charm of manner and address, such a rotundity, mellowness, and old-world grace of utterance as were irresistible. His voice, especially in reading aloud, was as sympathetic as it was powerful; "fibrous in all its tones, whether gentle or fierce," says Lord Houghton; deep, rich, and like the noblest music, "with a small, inartificial quiver striking to the heart," adds another witness, who by-and-by attached herself to the grand old man with a filial devotion, and who has left us the most life-like as well as the most affectionate portrait of him during these

years.[1] His pronunciation of certain words was that traditional in many old English families: "yaller" and "laylock" for yellow and lilac, "goold," "Room," and "woonderful," for gold, Romè, and wonderful.

Even at his wildest, Landor's demeanour to his pet animals furnished assurance enough that his fury was much more loud than deep, and that the quality most rooted in his nature was its gentleness. Dickens has best embodied this impression in his character of Mr. Boythorn in *Bleak House*, which is drawn, as is well known, from Landor, with his intellectual greatness left out. We all remember how Mr. Boythorn softly caresses his canary with his forefinger, at the same time as he thunders out defiance and revenge against Sir Leicester Dedlock: "He brings actions for trespass; I bring actions for trespass. He brings actions for assault and battery; I defend them, and continue to assault and batter. Ha! ha! ha!" Landor's great pet in these days was not really a canary, but a yellow Pomeranian dog, all vivacity, affection, and noise, who was sent him from Fiesole in 1844, and became the delight and companion of his life. With "Pomero" Landor would prattle in English and Italian as affectionately as a mother with her child. Pomero was his darling, the wisest and most beautiful of his race; Pomero had the brightest eyes and the most "woonderful yaller tail" ever seen. Sometimes it was Landor's humour to quote Pomero in speech and writing as a kind of sagacious elder brother, whose opinion had to be consulted on all subjects before he would deliver his own. This creature accompanied his master wherever he went, barking "not fiercely, but familiarly" at friend and stranger, and when they came in, would either station himself upon his master's head to

[1] See Prefatory Note, No. 10.

watch the people passing in the street, or else lie curled up in his basket until Landor, in talk with some visitor, began to laugh, and his laugh to grow and grow, when Pomero would spring up, and leap upon and fume about him, barking and screaming for sympathy until the whole street resounded. The two together, master and dog, were for years to be encountered daily on their walks about Bath and its vicinity, and there are many who perfectly well remember them; the majestic old man, looking not a whit the less impressive for his rusty and dusty brown suit, his bulging boots, his rumpled linen, or his battered hat; and his noisy, soft-haired, quick-glancing, inseparable companion.

Landor's habits were to breakfast at nine, and write principally before noon. His mode of writing was peculiar; he would sit absorbed in apparently vacant thought, but inwardly giving the finishing touches to the verses or the periods which he had last been maturing while he walked or lay awake at night; when he was ready, he would seize suddenly on one of the many scraps of paper and one of the many stumps of swan's-quill that usually lay at hand, and would write down what was in his head hastily, in his rough sloping characters, sprawling or compressed according to the space, and dry the written paper in the ashes. At two he dined, either alone or in the company of some single favoured friend, often on viands which he had himself bought and dressed, and with the accompaniment, when the meal was shared by a second person, of a few glasses of some famous vintage from the family cellar. In the afternoon he walked several miles in all weathers, having a special preference for a village near Bath (Widcombe), in the beautiful churchyard of which he had now determined that he should be buried.

From about seven in the evening, after the simplest possible tea, he generally read till late at night. His walls were covered with bad pictures, which he bought cheap, as formerly from the dealers of Florence, so now from those of Bath, and which his imagination endowed with every sign and every circumstance of authenticity.

In this manner twenty long years went by, during which Landor passed with little abatement of strength from elderly to patriarchal age. As time went on, the habits of his life changed almost imperceptibly. The circuit of his walks grew narrower; his visits to London and elsewhere less frequent. His friends of the younger generation, Dickens and Forster especially, and without fail, were accustomed every year to run down to Bath and bear him company on his birthday, the 30th of January. Carlyle, whose temper of hero-worship found much that was congenial in Landor's writings, and who delighted in the sterling and vigorous qualities of the man, once made the same journey in order to visit him. I do not know whether the invitation was ever accepted which Landor addressed to another illustrous junior in the following scrap of friendly doggrel:

"I entreat you, Alfred Tennyson,
Come and share my haunch of venison.
I have too a bin of claret,
Good, but better when you share it.
Tho' 'tis only a small bin,
There's a stock of it within;
And, as sure as I'm a rhymer,
Half a butt of Rudesheimer.
Come; among the sons of men is one
Welcomer than Alfred Tennyson?"

With several of the younger poets and men of letters of

those days Landor's prompt and cordial recognition of literary excellence had put him on terms of the friendliest correspondence and regard. But his friends of his own standing were beginning to fall about him fast.

> "We hurry to the river we must cross,
> And swifter downward every footstep wends;
> Happy who reach it ere they count the loss
> Of half their faculties and half their friends."

Thus Landor had written in his ode to Southey in 1833. Six years later Southey's mind had suddenly given way, and in 1843 he died, the name of Landor having been one of the last upon his lips while a glimmering of consciousness remained to him. Of the various tributes to his memory which Landor wrote at the time, that in the form of a vision, beginning

> "It was a dream, ah! what is not a dream?"

is conspicuous for its beauty, singularity, and tenderness. Francis Hare had died in middle age at Palermo three years earlier. Landor's next great loss was that of his dear friend and loyal admirer Ablett, who died in 1848. Within two years followed the death of Landor's brother Charles, and almost at the same time that of Lady Blessington. The long-impending crash had at last overtaken the establishment in Gore House; the house itself had been sold with all its contents and adjacencies; Count D'Orsay had followed the fortunes of Louis Napoleon to France, whither Lady Blessington soon went also, and where she died in 1850 at St. Germain. Again Landor has commemorated his affection and his sense of his loss in his best vein of graceful and meditative verse. It had been one of Landor's great consolations during a portion

of his life at Bath that Madame de Molandé had been living in that city with her grandchildren. In August, 1851, she too died in France. It was just forty-five years since he had written his lament for the necessity which forced them to part in the days of their early passion:

> "Ianthè, thou art called across the sea,
> A path forbidden *me!*"

Let us quote in this connexion, not any of the commemorative lines which Landor wrote on receiving the news of her death, but rather those other verses of grave self-confidence and assured appeal to the ages with which, it does not appear precisely at what date, he set a fitting and final seal on the poetry referring to this episode of his life.

> "Well I remember how you smiled
> To see me write your name upon
> The soft sea-sand. . . . *O what a child!*
> *You think you're writing upon stone!*
>
> "I have since written what no tide
> Shall ever wash away, what men
> Unborn shall read o'er ocean wide,
> And find Ianthè's name again."

All these deaths would naturally have prepared Landor's mind for his own, had he stood in need of such preparation. But he had long faced that contingency with the same composure with which others are encouraged to face it in so many of his tender and heroic admonitions. Of each successive birthday as it came round he felt as though it might naturally be his last. It was on the morning after his seventy-fifth that he wrote and read aloud before breakfast those lines which he afterwards prefixed to the volume called *Last Fruit:*

"I strove with none, for none was worth my strife:
Nature I loved, and, next to nature, Art;
I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart."

Infinitely touching seemed his dignified, resigned air and beautiful manly voice to the girlish friend whom he at this time called daughter, and who was standing by as he read; and when he saw how he had brought the tears into her eyes, the old man came across and patted her shoulder, saying, "My good child! I really think you love your father almost as well as Pomero does." But the summons to depart was destined to come to many another yet of those dear to Landor before it came to himself. Within three years after the losses last mentioned, there followed those of his sister Elizabeth and of his ever-faithful friend, the accomplished and pure-hearted Julius Hare. By his lips, as by Southey's, Landor's was one of the last names ever spoken. Next went Kenyon; and next, having lived beyond the common age of his kind, died Pomero, leaving the daily footsteps of the old man more alone than ever.

But it is time that we should go back, and acquaint ourselves with the nature of the work in literature which Landor had been doing during this long autumn of his life in England. His whole literary career may best, I think, be divided into three periods—the first of twenty-six years, from 1795 to 1821; the second of sixteen, from 1821 to 1837; and the third, incredible as it sounds, again of twenty-six, from 1837 to 1863. The first period, as we have seen, was one of experiment only partially felicitous; experiment chiefly in the highest kinds of poetry and in the serious employment of Latin for the purposes of original modern writing; its principal achievements are

Gebir, *Count Julian*, and the *Idyllia Heroica*. The second period, from 1821 to 1837, that is from Landor's forty-sixth year to his sixty-second, is the period of his central and greatest work, consisting chiefly of dramatic or quasi-dramatic writings in prose; its principal achievements are the *Imaginary Conversations*, the *Examination of Shakspeare*, *Pericles and Aspasia*, and the *Pentameron*. The third period, upon which we have now entered, includes all the rest of Landor's life, from his sixty-second year to his eighty-eighth (1837—1863), and is one of miscellaneous production in many kinds of writing, with a preponderance, on the whole, of verse. From composition in one form or another Landor never rested long. He declared over and over again his unalterable resolution to give up writing, sometimes in a fit of disgust, sometimes lest as he grew older his powers should fail him unawares. But such resolutions were no sooner made than broken. He worked now to satisfy his own impulse, now to please a friend who was also an editor. In all his literary undertakings throughout this third period he was in the habit of acting on the advice and with the help of Mr. Forster; advice generally discreet, and help at all times ungrudging. The misfortune is that this most unselfish of friends should have proved also the least self-forgetful of biographers, and the least capable of keeping his own services in the background.

Landor's first important publication during the Bath period was in the form of dramatic verse. Being laid up with a sprained ancle, he occupied himself with composing first one play and then another on the story of Giovanna of Naples. In reality that story is as dark with crime and uncertainty, and as lightning-lit with flashes of romance, and with the spell of beauty accused yet wor-

shipped, as is the story of Mary Queen of Scots herself. Landor's version of it corresponds to none that will be found in histories. "I am a horrible confounder of historical facts," he writes. "I have usually one history that I have read, and another that I have invented." It was like his chivalry that he, as a matter of course, took the favourable view of the queen's character, and like his hatred of the Romish priesthood that he made the court confessor, Fra Rupert, the villain of his plot and the contriver of the murder of the queen's husband. The first of his two plays Landor named after the victim of the murder, Andrea of Hungary; the second after the queen herself. The volume appeared in 1839, with a prologue in verse addressed to his young friend "Rose," and an intimation that the profits of the sale were intended to be handed over to Grace Darling. From first to last it was Landor's habit thus to destine to some charitable object the profits which in perfect good faith, and in defiance of reiterated experience, his imagination invariably anticipated from the sale of his works.

Within a couple of years Landor had written and published separately yet another play, which completed this Neapolitan trilogy, and which he called after the name of the villain *Fra Rupert*. The scenes of this trilogy are as deficient in sustained construction and dramatic sequence as *Count Julian* itself. They are pitched in a lower key, and written with more variety of style, than that unmitigated and Titanic tragedy. The character of the young king, with his boorish training and his chivalrous nature, from the neglected soil of which all the latent virtues are drawn forth by the loving wisdom of Giovanna, is a new conception excellently worked out. The figure of Fra Rupert, on the other hand, and that of Rienzi, seem to me

types somewhat boyish and overcharged, the one of brutal coarseness and brutal craft, the other of the demoralization consequent upon the exercise of unlimited power. Among the feminine personages we find, as always in the work of Landor, the most beautifully conceived traits of great-hearted sweetness and devotion; varied, however, in lighter moments with others like the following:

"Any one now would say you thought me handsome,"

exclaims Fiammetta to Boccaccio; a royal princess, be it remembered, to a clerkly and courtly poet. Taken as collections of separate scenes, these plays, unsatisfactory as plays, are full of fine feeling, and of solid activity and ingenuity of conception. A curious point in relation to the second of the three is that it bears in some points of plot and situation a remarkably close resemblance to a tragedy on the same subject published anonymously fifteen years before, under the title of *Count Arezzi*. This piece when it appeared had by some been taken for the work of Byron, and for a few days had been on that account in much demand. Its real author had been no other than Landor's own brother Robert. When the resemblance was brought to Walter Landor's notice he seemed utterly unable to account for it, having to the best of his knowledge never either seen or heard of *Count Arezzi*. But he was subject to forgetfulness equally complete when, after the lapse of a few years, passages of his own writing were recited to him; and the impression retained by Mr. Robert Landor was that his brother must have read his play when it first appeared, and, forgetting the fact afterwards, preserved portions of it in his mind by an act of purely unconscious recollection. In conduct and construction, indeed, the plays written by Robert Landor are better than any by

his illustrious brother. There was much in common between the two men. Robert Landor had nearly everything of Walter except the passionate energy of his temperament and his genius. He was an admirable scholar, and in his dramas of *Count Arezzi*, *The Earl of Brecon*, *Faith's Fraud*, and *The Ferryman*, and his didactic romances, *The Fountain of Arethusa* and the *Fawn of Sertorius*, he shows himself master of a sound English style and a pure and vigorous vein of feeling and invention. Personally, he was the prince of gentlemen; of a notably fine presence, taller than his eldest brother, and of equally distinguished bearing, without his brother's irascibilities. He had the same taste for seclusion, and lived almost unknown at his beautiful rectory of Birlingham, contented with his modest private fortune, and spending on charity the entire income of his living. After the brothers had parted in 1816 at Como, a coldness had arisen between them, and it was only now, when the elder had returned to England, that they were again on the old terms of mutual affection and respect.

Soon after this trilogy it would appear that Landor wrote the last of his complete plays, the *Siege of Ancona*. This subject, with its high-pitched heroisms, its patriotisms and invincibilities, suited Landor well, and the play, although the least noticed by his critics, is I think, upon the whole, his best. I do not know whether it was of these four dramas, and of *Count Julian* in especial, or of all Landor's dramatic and quasi-dramatic writings together, that Mr. Browning was thinking when, a few years later, he dedicated to Landor, as "a great dramatic poet," the volume containing his own two plays of *Luria* and the *Soul's Tragedy*. The letter written by the elder poet in acknowledgment of this tribute from the younger is so character-

istic alike of his genial friendliness to his brother authors, and of the broad and manly justice of his habitual criticisms both on himself and others, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of quoting it:

"Accept my thanks for the richest of Easter offerings made to any one for many years. I staid at home last evening on purpose to read *Luria*, and if I lost any good music (as I certainly did) I was well compensated in kind. To-day I intend to devote the rainy hours entirely to *The Soul's Tragedy*. I wonder whether I shall find it as excellent as *Luria*. You have conferred too high a distinction on me in your graceful inscription. I am more of a dramatist in prose than in poetry. My imagination, like my heart, has always been with the women, I mean the young, for I cannot separate that adjective from that substantive. This has taught me above all things the immeasurable superiority of Shakspeare. His women raise him to it. I mean the *immensity* of the superiority; the superiority would exist without. I am sometimes ready to shed tears at his degradation in Comedy. I would almost have given the first joint of my fore-finger rather than he should have written, for instance, such trash as that in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. His wit is pounded, and spiced, and potted, and covered with rancidity at last. A glass of champagne at Molière's is very refreshing after this British spirit. Go on and pass *us* poor devils! If you do not go far ahead of me, I will crack my whip at you and make you spring forward. So, to use a phrase of Queen Elizabeth,

"'Yours as you demean yourself,'

"W. LANDOR."

Returning to the years 1839–'42, Landor in this interval, besides his trilogy of plays, published in Mr. Forster's review, and at his request, *Criticisms*, in his ripest and soundest vein, on Theocritus, Catullus, and Petrarch; and by the advice of the same friend withheld from publication a reply to an adverse review of the *Pentameron* which he at the time, apparently in error, attributed to Hallam. In this reply Landor had both defended and supplemented

the view of Dante which he had put forward in the *Decameron*, and had in his grandest manner set forth what he conceived to be the qualifications necessary for the right appreciation of that master:

"Mr. Landor has no more questioned the sublimity or the profoundness of Dante, than his readers will question whether he or his critic is the more competent to measure them. To judge properly and comprehensively of Dante, first the poetical mind is requisite; then, patient industry in exploring the works of his contemporaries, and in going back occasionally to those volumes of the schoolmen which lie dormant in the libraries of his native city. Profitable too are excursions in Val d'Arno and Val d'Elsa, and in those deep recesses of the Apennines where the elder language is yet abiding in its rigid strength and fresh austerity. Twenty years and unbroken leisure have afforded to Mr. Landor a small portion of such advantages, at least of the latter; a thousand could pour none effectually into his *perlusum vas*."

In the three or four years following the production of these plays and criticisms Landor was occupied almost entirely in preparing for press, with the indefatigable help of Mr. Forster, a collected edition of his writings. It was in 1846 that this edition at length appeared. It contained the whole mass of Landor's work compressed into two tall volumes in royal octavo, with the text printed in double columns; an unattractive and inconvenient arrangement. The principal novelties in the collection were, first, the supplementary *Conversations* recovered from the light-hearted custody of Mr. Willis, together with others written during the last fifteen years, forty-two in all; and next the *Hellenics;* consisting of translations into English blank verse, undertaken in the first instance at the suggestion of Lady Blessington, of those *Idyllia* of Landor's in Latin the first edition of which had been printed at Oxford in 1814, and the second at Pisa in 1820; together

with some others written originally in English. The dedications of the original *Conversations* were not reprinted, several of the patriots and liberators to whom they were addressed having in the interval precipitated themselves, in Landor's esteem, from the pinnacle of glory to the abyss of shame. To the two volumes was prefixed instead a brief inscription addressed in terms of grateful affection to Julius Hare and John Forster; to the latter of whom a second address in verse brought the book to a close.

So vast and so diversified a mass of energetic thinking and masterly writing it would within the compass of any other two volumes be hard to find. But one whole class of Landor's work, and his own favourite class, had found no place in them—I mean his work in Latin—and accordingly he next set about collecting, correcting, and in part rewriting his productions in that language, both prose and verse. By dint of infinite pains and zeal on his own part, and on that of Mr. Forster, this final edition of his Latin writings was got through the press in 1847, in the shape of a small closely printed volume called *Poemata et Inscriptiones*. In the meantime a few lovers of poetry had been much struck by the choice and singular quality of the *Hellenics*. Landor was encouraged to reprint these poems separately, and in the course of this same year they were issued by the house of Moxon, with additions and revisions, in one of those small volumes in green cloth which the muse of Mr. Tennyson has so long made welcome and familiar to our eyes.

The massive individuality of Landor's mind was accompanied, as we have seen, by a many-sided power of historical sympathy, which made him at home not in one only but in several, and those the most dissimilar, ages of the past. The strenuous gravity and heroic independence of

Puritan England had entered into his imaginative being, as well as the contented grace and harmonious self-possession of ancient Hellas. But of all things he was perhaps the most of a Greek at heart. His freedom from any tincture of mysticism, his love of unconfused shapes and outlines, his easy dismissal of the unfathomable and the unknown, and steady concentration of the mind upon the purely human facts of existence, its natural sorrows and natural consolations, all helped him to find in the life of ancient Greece a charm without alloy, and in her songs and her philosophies a beauty and a wisdom without shortcoming. Adequate scholarship, and a close literary familiarity with the Greek writers, fortified this natural sympathy with the knowledge which was wanting to Keats, whose flashes of luminous and enraptured insight into things Hellenic are for want of such knowledge lacking in coherency and in assurance. Landor on his part is without Keats's gift, the born poet's gift, of creative, untaught felicity in epithet and language; his power over language is of another kind, more systematic, trained, and regular. But in dealing with things Hellenic Landor strikes generally with complete assurance the true imaginative note. This is equally the case whether, as in *Pericles and Aspasia*, and in his dialogues of ancient philosophers and statesmen, he makes the Greeks themselves extol the glories of their race, or whether he trusts the exposition of those glories in the mouths of modern speakers, as when Michelangelo is made to remind Vittoria Colonna of the conquests of the race in war and art, of Salamis and the *Prometheus* of Æschylus, together:

"The conquerors of kings until then omnipotent, kings who had trampled on the towers of Babylon and had shaken the eternal sanctuaries of Thebes, the conquerors of those kings bowed their olive-

crowned heads to the sceptre of Destiny, and their tears flowed profusely over the immeasurable wilderness of human woes."

Hear, again, how Alfieri is made to correct the false taste of another Italian poet in his description of Pluto, and to draw in its place the true Greek picture of that god and of his kingdom:

"Does this describe the brother of Jupiter? does it not rather the devils of our carneval, than him at whose side, upon asphodel and amaranth, the sweet Persephone sits pensively contented, in that deep motionless quiet which mortals pity and which the gods enjoy, than him who, under the umbrage of Elysium, gazes at once upon all the beauties that on earth were separated by times and countries . . . Helena and Eriphyle, Polyxena and Hermione, Deidamia and Deianira, Leda and Omphale, Atalanta and Cydippe, Laodamia, with her arm around the neck of a fond youth, whom she still seems afraid of losing, and apart, the daughters of Niobe, though now in smiles, still clinging to their parent; and many thousands more, each of whom is worth the dominions, once envied, of both brothers?"

Landor was a less accomplished master in verse than prose; and we hardly find in the *Hellenics* anything equal to the lovely interlinked cadences, and the assured imaginative ease and justice, of passages like this. What we do find is an extreme, sometimes an excessive, simplicity and reserve both of rhythm and language, conveying, in many instances at least, a delightful succession of classical images—images not only lucid in themselves, but more lucidly and intelligibly connected than had been Landor's wont in his earlier narrative poetry. The *Hamadryad* and its sequel, *Acon and Rhodope*, of which no Latin original had been first composed, these with *Enallos and Cymodameia* are, I think, the choicest examples of the vein; one or two of the others, such as the *Altar of Modesty*, had better have been left in their original Latin. The

gem, however, of the volume, is to my mind not any one of mythologic tales or idyls, but the following brief, exquisitely wrought scene of household mourning. The husband, Elpenor, stands by the bedside of the wife, Artemidora, and speaks:

"'Artemidora! Gods invisible,
While thou wert lying faint along the couch,
Have tied the sandals to thy slender feet,
And stand beside thee, ready to convey
Thy weary steps where other rivers flow.
Refreshing shades will waft thy weariness
Away, and voices like thy own come near
And nearer, and solicit an embrace.'
Artemidora sigh'd, and would have prest
The hand now pressing hers, but was too weak.
Iris stood over her dark hair unseen
While thus Elpenor spake. He lookt into
Eyes that had given light and life erewhile
To those above them, but now dim with tears
And wakefulness. Again he spake of joy
Eternal. At that word, that sad word, *joy*,
Faithful and fond her bosom heaved once more;
Her head fell back: and now a loud deep sob
Swell'd through the darken'd chamber; 'twas not hers."

Landor can never have seen those beautiful and characteristic works of Attic sculpture, the funeral monuments in which the death of the beloved is shadowed forth in a group representing, only with a touch of added solemnity in the expressions, his or her preparations for departure upon an ordinary journey or an ordinary day's work. But his poem is conceived in the very spirit of those sculptures. Like all his best work, it has to be read repeatedly and slowly before it will be found to have yielded up the full depth and tenderness of its meanings. The beauty of the dying woman implied, not described; the gentle dealings

with her of the unseen messenger of the gods who has placed the sandals about her feet in sleep; the solicitude of the husband, who as long as she breathes will speak to her only words of comfort; his worship, which, when he would tell her of the voices that will greet her beyond the tomb, can find no words to express their sweetness except by calling them "like her own;" the pressure with which she would, but cannot, answer him; the quiver of the heart with which she expires upon the mention and the idea of joy—for what are those unknown and uncompanioned joys to her?—the bursting of the floodgates of his grief when there is no longer any reason for restraining it; these things are conceived with that depth and chastity of tenderness, that instinctive beauty in pathos, which Landor shares with none but the greatest masters of the human heart. If we are to let ourselves notice the presence of imperfections or mannerisms in so beautiful a piece of work and of feeling, it will be to point out the mode (habitual with Landor) in which the pronouns are made to do more work than they can well bear in the words "those above them;" meaning the eyes of Elpenor, now, at the moment of the description, occupying a position above those of his wife, inasmuch as she is lying on the sick-bed and he standing over her. This is an instance of Landor's habit of excessive condensation; just as the last lines contain an instance of his habit of needlessly avoiding, in narrative, the main fact of a situation, and relating instead some result or concomitant of the situation from which the reader is required to infer its main fact for himself.

To this 1847 edition of the *Hellenics* Landor prefixed a dedication in capital letters, which is a monument at once of the magnificence of his prose style and of the sanguine political enthusiasm which remained proof in

him against every disenchantment. The liberal Cardinal Mastai had just been elected Pope as Pio Nono, and for a moment the eyes of all Europe were turned in hope towards the new pontiff. To him, accordingly, Landor inscribed his book. After a contrast of his opportunities and his purposes with those of Louis Philippe, the inscription concludes:

"Cunning is not wisdom; prevarication is not policy; and (novel as the notion is, it is equally true) armies are not strength: Acre and Waterloo show it, and the flames of the Kremlin and the solitudes of Fontainbleau. One honest man, one wise man, one peaceful man, commands a hundred millions without a baton and without a charger. He wants no fortress to protect him: he stands higher than any citadel can raise him, brightly conspicuous to the most distant nations, God's servant by election, God's image by beneficence."

The events of the next few years revived in Landor all the emotions of his earlier manhood. The year 1848 seemed to him like another and more hopeful year 1821. The principles of popular government and of despotism once more encountered each other in the death-grapple. The struggle was sharper than the last had been; a greater number of tyrannies reeled and tottered, and for a longer time; but the final defeat was, at least it seemed to be, not less crushing, nor the final disappointment less complete. Against the renegadoes of liberty, such as the Pope himself and Louis Napoleon, there were no bounds to Landor's indignation. By the abilities and friendliness of the latter he had been, in personal intercourse at Gore House, quite won, and foreseeing after the revolution of 1848 that he would soon be called to the absolute government of his country, was nevertheless inclined to believe in his integrity of purpose. But the first shot fired against republican Rome in the name of republican France, and

by the authority of her President, "parted us," as Landor wrote, "for ever," and the verses in which Landor by-and-by denounced the refusal of the right of asylum to Kossuth seem by their concentrated fire of scorn and indignation to anticipate the *Châtiments* of Victor Hugo. Kossuth, Manin, Mazzini, Garibaldi, Türr, these, and especially Kossuth, are the great heroes of Landor's admiration now. He wrote a small, now almost undiscoverable, volume of *Italics* in verse, besides several new political *Conversations* —of Garibaldi with Mazzini; of King Carlo-Alberto with the Princess Belgioioso; and others again of reactionary cardinals and ministers with each other. Even after the movement of 1848 and 1849 had been for the time being diverted or utterly suppressed, Landor continued to be much preoccupied with questions of policy and government. In 1851 he published a series of letters on priest-craft and ecclesiastical organization, entitled *Popery, British and Foreign*, and about the same time a series of ten *Letters to Cardinal Wiseman*. In 1854 the approach of the Crimean war gave rise in the old man, now in his eightieth year, to reflexions on the necessity of curbing the power of Russia; on the possibility of reconstituting the kingdom of Poland; and on the sagacity and probable achievements of Louis Napoleon, in whom he for a short time experienced a brief return of confidence. These reflexions he cast into the shape of *Letters*, written nominally by an American travelling in England to a friend at home, and dedicated to Mr. Gladstone, with the words, "Sir, of all whom we have been trusting, you alone have never deceived us. Together with the confidence, the power of England is in your hands. May those hands, for the benefit of your country and of the world, be as strong as they are pure."

Three years later Landor addressed to Emerson a brief letter, the essence of proud urbanity and compendious force, in which he rectified several of that writer's observations concerning himself in the *English Traits*, and took occasion, amidst other strokes of the most serene autobiographical candour, to state exactly his sentiments in regard to tyrannicide. After speaking of Alfieri, Landor goes on:

"Had he been living in these latter days, his bitterness would have overflowed not on France alone, nor Austria in addition, the two beasts that have torn Italy in pieces, and are growling over her bones; but more, and more justly, on those constitutional governments which, by abetting, have aided them in their ingressions and incursions. We English are the most censurable of all. . . . The ministers of England have signed that Holy *Alliance* which delivered every free State to the domination of arbitrary and irresponsible despots. The ministers of England have entered more recently into treaties with usurpers and assassins. And now, forsóoth, it is called *assassination* to remove from the earth an assassin; the assassin of thousands; an outlaw, the subverter of his country's, and even of his own, laws. The valiant and the wise of old thought differently."

Backed by their authority, Landor goes on to contend that tyrannicide involves less misery than war, and to acknowledge that he for one holds and ever will hold that "the removal of an evil at the least possible cost is best."

Some time before this, in 1853, two new volumes of Landor's writing had been put forth. One was simply a detached reprint of those of his imaginary conversations in which the speakers were ancient Greeks and Romans: *Conversations of the Greeks and Romans* the volume was called, and its dedication to Charles Dickens, in which he congratulates his friend above all things on his labours "in breaking up and cultivating the unreclaimed wastes of hu-

manity," is another example of the combined warmth and heartiness of his friendships and the catholic justice of his appreciations. Landor's second volume of 1853, in appearance uniform with the last-named, was called by him *The Last Fruit off an Old Tree.* It was dedicated to the Marchese d'Azeglio, and to the title-page was prefixed that quatrain of Landor's upon his seventy-fifty birthday which I have already quoted (p. 183). It contained eighteen new *Conversations,* most of them modern and political, besides a number of the prose pieces published during the past six years in pamphlets and newspapers. These included, besides the pieces of which mention has been made already, an evidence of Landor's undecaying feeling towards the memory of Southey, in the shape of a remonstrance addressed to Lord Brougham on the public neglect both of that memory itself, and of the person of the poet's surviving son. Of himself Landor in this letter gives the monumental and just description: "I claim no place in the world of letters; I am alone, and will be alone, as long as I live, and after." The poetry which concludes the volume of *Last Fruit* is, Landor says, what I wish the prose could have been, mostly panegyrical;" it consists, that is to say, in great part, of "epistles" and other pieces addressed in the spirit of friendly discussion or more friendly praise to his comrades and juniors in the craft of letters. Last of all came five detached "scenes" in verse on the subject of the Cenci; scenes written not in rivalry, still less in any implied depreciation, of the work of Shelley, but simply taking up the theme afresh, as it were by a different handle and from a different side.

The two dramatic dialogues in *Last Fruit*—those of Leonora di Este, the beloved of Tasso, with Tasso's confessor, and of Admiral Blake with his brother Humphrey—

are among the finest Landor ever wrote; the modern political, whether laudatory or satiric in their purport, are for the most part tedious enough. A long conversation between Landor himself and Archdeacon Hare, represented as taking place in the course of a walk at Hurstmonceaux, is the ripest and most interesting of that class which began thirty years before with the first dialogue of Johnson and Horne Tooke. The discussion turns almost entirely on technical points of English literature and the English language. In it, among other things, Landor resumes, defends, and illustrates those principles of spelling which he had founded long ago on analogy and on the study of the early English writers, and which he had insisted on actually putting into practice, to the distraction of his printers, in a large proportion of his published writings. Most of his readers had been accustomed to regard his usage in these matters as mere innovations dictated by arbitrary whim. Landor showed that he was guided not by whim but by principle, and denied that his changes were innovations at all. He knew that the current practice of any age in English spelling was purely a matter of accident and custom; and to the accident and custom of his own age he refused to bow in cases where he found those of another to be preferable. He drew up lists of those words which he found habitually spelt by any of the earlier writers, from Chaucer down, in a manner more consistent with derivation, with sound, or with analogy, than by the moderns. Thus a regard to derivation made him write *exclame*, *proclame*, *strategem*, instead of exclaim, proclaim, stratagem; a regard to sound, *foren*, *sovran*, *interr*, instead of foreign, sovereign, inter; to analogy, *embassador*, or else why embassy? *receit*, or else why deceit and conceit? *grandor* or *grandour*, or else why honour, labour, and not

honneur, labeur, and so on with the rest? Fidelity to the spoken sound also made Landor banish the termination *ed* from the preterites and past participles of verbs ending with sibilant, or soft labial or guttural, consonants, and write *wisht*, *dropt*, *lookt*, instead of wished, dropped, looked. In this last usage Landor was followed by the brothers Hare, and by many of those on whom the Hares had influence; including, as we all know, no less a master than Mr. Tennyson. Custom, reasonable or other, has proved too strong to yield to others of Landor's proposed reforms. But for the student it is not easy to find better reading, a more instructive array of instances, or a more pointed and clenching method of presenting arguments, than are contained in his discussions on these mechanical and technical matters of language. Landor hated to be confounded with the so-called phonetic reformers of spelling, as Hartley Coleridge first, and afterwards one or two others, had confounded him. In this matter as in others he regarded himself essentially as a conservative, and all he proposed was to select for imitation and revival such portions of the practice of the best writers, from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries, as seemed on examination to be most correct and rational. From the orthography of words the discussion passes on to the words themselves, and we find Landor inveighing in his most vigorous vein against the colloquial corruptions which he conceived to be defiling every day the fountains of his mother tongue. "Humbug" was a word which he barely agreed to tolerate; for "pluck," "sham," "traps" (meaning luggage), "giant trees," "monster meetings," "palmy days," and many other phrases of contemporary slang or contemporary fine writing, he had no toleration whatever. He felt like a sentinel keeping guard over the honour and

integrity of the English language. And for such a post no man was better fitted either by knowledge or reflexion. So massive and minute a literary acquaintance with his mother tongue, combined with so jealous and sensitive an instinct in its verbal criticism, have probably never existed in any other man. Nor was there ever a time when a sentinel was more needed. Even men of genius and of just popularity—a Carlyle, a Dickens, a Macaulay—had each in his way accustomed the millions of English-speaking and English-reading men to find their language forced into all manner of startling or glittering usages, of extravagant or unquiet forms and devices. There were few writers, and of these Landor was the foremost, who adhered to a classical regularity of language and to a classical composure and restraint of style. Landor was rigorous in rejecting from his vocabulary all words but such as had stood the test of time. He was perhaps the most exact of all English writers in observing the laws of logical and grammatical construction. His style was not founded on that of any master, but included, both in vocabulary and in structure, the resources of all the best English prose writers, from Sir Thomas Browne and Milton to Horace Walpole and Lord Chesterfield. He was not given, except for special purposes, to the use of strong monosyllables, or of the curt Teutonic English which has been brought into fashion in our own time, but preferred rather, though not pedantically, the polysyllabic articulation of words derived from the Latin.

In all this, however, Landor was as a voice crying in the wilderness. It is amazing now, and it was amazing then, that the grand old preacher should have so few listeners. The English-reading public had taken him at his word. They left him where he was content to remain, alone.

They gave him no place in the world of letters, while they excited themselves to passion over the work of scores of lesser men. Less attention was paid to him in England than in America, where about this time, 1856, a *Selection* of detached thoughts and sentences from the *Conversations* was published at Boston, with an admirable critical introduction by Mr. Hilliard. It is incredible, but true, that within three years of the publication of the *Last Fruit* an elaborate article on English prose style, appearing in an English magazine to which Landor was himself an occasional contributor, should have actually contained no mention of his name at all. This neglect did not trouble him in the least, nor did he regard with a shadow of envy the applause bestowed on others. "Caring not a straw for popularity, and little more for fame," he simply uttered from time to time the thoughts that were in him in the language which he found most fit. From a few, indeed, of those who themselves stood nearest him in power and art, every such utterance as it appeared drew forth a fresh tribute of homage. In 1856 Landor published in a separate pamphlet (the "proceeds" destined, as of old, to a specified purpose of charity) a set of *Scenes from the Study*—scenes again in verse, and again drawn fearlessly from a domain where the greatest had been at work before him. The subject was Antony and Cleopatra. "What an undaunted soul before his eighty years," writes Mrs. Browning, after reading them, "and how good for all other souls to contemplate!" Still, in the same year, he put some of his most pregnant thoughts on language, and especially, strange as it may seem, on the English language, into a dialogue between Alfieri and Metastasio, published in *Fraser's Magazine*. "Do you think the grand old Pagan wrote that piece just now?" asks Carlyle, in a letter

written at the time. "The sound of it is like the ring of Roman swords on the helmets of barbarians! The unsubduable old Roman!"

But alas! there came before long news of the old Roman which could not but make those who loved and honoured him regret that he had not succumbed earlier to the common lot. Of all Landor's wild collisions with the world of fact, the most melancholy and the most notorious befel him now in his patriarchal age. In 1856, the year of the *Letter to Emerson* and the *Scenes from the Study*, he had paid one of his now infrequent visits to London; had joined a party of friends at the Crystal Palace, and been as vigorous and as whimsical in his talk as ever. From about the beginning of the next year, 1857, there seemed to be coming over him a change for the worse. His letters bespoke both physical decay and mental disturbance. Worse followed; it was found that he had allowed himself to be dragged headlong into a miserable and compromising quarrel between two ladies at Bath. One of these was the wife of a clergyman, the other a young girl, her bosom friend until the quarrel arose; both had been very intimate with Landor during the last few years. To the younger he, with his royal and inveterate love of giving, had lately made over a small legacy in money, which had been left him as a token of friendship by Kenyon. In the course of the quarrel the elder lady, who had shortly before accepted help from the younger out of Landor's gift, took exception to the nature of her intimacy with the giver. Landor, on his part, utterly lost control of himself. Regarding himself as the champion of innocent youth against an abominable combination of fraud and calumny, in the frenzy of his indignant imagination he remembered or invented all kinds of previous malpractices against the

foe. He betook himself to his old insane weapons, and both in print and writing launched invectives against her in an ultra-Roman taste. He wrote odious letters to her husband. Legal steps being set on foot to restrain him, his unfailing friend Forster came down to see what could be done. By his persuasions, joined to those of Landor's own lawyers, the enraged old man was with difficulty induced to sign an apology, coupled with an undertaking not to repeat his offence. But Mr. Forster had felt, at the time when this engagement was made, that Landor could hardly be trusted to remember or observe it. Age, illness, and indignation had rendered him for the time being uncontrollable and irresponsible. For the first time in more than twenty years he proceeded to act in defiance of Mr. Forster's advice in a matter of publication. Having recovered from the hostile party in the dispute a number of scraps in verse, the least considered and least valuable that he had thrown off during recent years, he entrusted them to an Edinburgh house to be sent to press, under the plea that copies of them were abroad, and would be made public by others if not by himself. The volume appeared early in 1858, under the title *Dry Sticks, fagoted by W. S. Landor;* "by the late W. S. Landor," the old man had at first insisted that the title should run. The book was made up of the recovered scraps and epigrams in question; with a few others in Latin; besides a reprint, after an "occultation," as Landor put it, "of sixty years," of the *Poems from the Arabic and Persian;* and a number of complimentary pieces addressed by various writers to himself. Unhappily the old man had not been able to restrain himself from adding also, in defiance of his signed engagement, one or two of his worst lampoons against his enemy. The enemy seems to have been nothing loth to take ad-

vantage of the fault, and a suit for damages was immediately set on foot. Before it came on Landor had a stroke which left him insensible for forty-eight hours, and for some weeks afterwards he hung between life and death. His extraordinary strength, however, carried him through, and he came to himself better both in body and mind after his illness. The trial was in the meantime coming on at the August assize. Practically there could be no defence; the attacks were on the face of them libellous, and Landor's friends advised him to go abroad, in order if possible to protect himself against the consequences of the inevitable verdict; first selling his personal property and pictures, and making a formal transfer of all his real property to his eldest son. This was accordingly done, and just before the trial came on the forlorn old man set out to leave his native land once more.

CHAPTER VIII.

SECOND EXILE AND LAST DAYS—HEROIC IDYLS—DEATH.

[1858—1864.]

On his way to the Continent, Landor arrived suddenly at Mr. Forster's house, where Dickens and some others were at dinner. Dickens left the table to see him, expecting naturally to find him broken and cast down. But the old man's thoughts were far away; he seemed as though no ugly or infuriating realities had any existence for him, and sat talking in his most genial vein, principally about Latin poetry. "I would not blot him out, in his tender gallantry, as he sat upon his bed at Forster's that night, for a million of wild mistakes at eighty-four years of age;" so wrote the manly-hearted and understanding witness who then saw Landor for the last time. This was on the 12th of July, 1858. The trial came on at Gloucester in the next month, and the jury brought in a verdict of 1000*l.* damages against the defendant.

Stricken but unsubdued, his strength and his intellectual faculties even in some slight degree restored, Landor had in the meantime travelled as far as Genoa, where it was his intention to take up his abode. Advice well meant but injudicious prevailed on him to change his plan. He pushed on to Fiesole, and rejoined his family in the villa which he had once loved so well, and which it was just three and twenty years ago since he had left. At first he

received some degree of contentment and even pleasure from his return to his old Italian home: and it is affecting to read the verses in which the old man's sense of dignity and high desert struggles invincibly with the consciousness of his humiliation, and he endeavours to find in the charm of his present surroundings a consolation for his late disasters:

"If I extoll'd the virtuous and the wise,
The brave and beautiful, and well discern'd
Their features as they fix'd their eyes on mine,
If I have won a kindness never vow'd,
Could I foresee that . . . fallen among thieves,
Despoil'd, bar, wounded . . . tramping ruffians
Should throw their dirt upon me, not withheld
Some small sharp pebbles carefully inclosed?
However, from one crime they are exempt:
They do not strike a brother, striking me.
This breathes o'er me a cool serenity,' "
O'er me divided from old friends, in lands
Pleasant, if aught without old friends can please,
Where round their lowly mud-built terraces
Grey olives twinkle in this wintery sun,
And crimson light invests yon quarried cliff,
And central towers from distant vitas peer
Until Arezzo's ridges intervene."

But these consolations were not destined to endure. Landor's fate had still fresh trials in reserve. The scandal of the Bath affair made some of his old friends in Florence look coldly on him, and among them the English minister, Lord Normanby. At this the old man was wounded to the quick: and if the whole case were not so deeply melancholy, we might well smile at the majestic document in which he presently relieved his feelings:

"My Lord,—Now I am recovering from an illness of several

months' duration, aggravated no little by your lordship's rude reception of me at the Cascine, in presence of my family and innumerable Florentines, I must remind you in the gentlest terms of the occurrence.

"We are both of us old men, my lord, and are verging on decrepitude and imbecility, else my note might be more energetic. I am not inobservant of distinctions. You by the favour of a minister are Marquis of Normanby, I by the grace of God am

"WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR."

But worse than any slight inflicted by a minister were the crosses which Landor found that he had to endure at home. Time had done nothing to diminish, but rather everything to increase, the incompatibilities between himself and those of his household. By settlement, deed of gift, deed of transfer, or otherwise, Landor had now made over all his property to his wife and children—the bulk of it to his eldest son—and except for a small sum in ready money which he had brought with him, he was absolutely dependent upon his family for the means of subsistence. Doubtless he was a wilful and unmanageable inmate in the house to which he had so long been a stranger. None the less was it the obvious duty of those nearest him, and enriched at his expense, either to make his life, at whatever cost of compliance and forbearance, endurable to him under their common roof, or else to provide him with the means of living in his own way elsewhere. It seems only too certain that they made no serious or patient attempt to do the former; and the latter, when Landor desired it, they declined to do. Pathetic, almost tragic, was the portion of the old man in those days, a Lear who found no kindness from his own. Thrice he left the villa with the determination to live by himself in Florence; but his wish was not indulged, and thrice he was brought back to the home which was no home for him, and where he was dealt

with neither generously nor gently. The fourth time he presented himself in the house of Mr. Browning with only a few pauls in his pocket, declaring that nothing should ever induce him to return.

Mr. Browning, an interview with the family at the villa having satisfied him that reconciliation or return was indeed past question, put himself at once in communication with Mr. Forster and with Landor's brothers in England. The latter instantly undertook to supply the needs of their eldest brother during the remainder of his life. Thenceforth an income sufficient for his frugal wants was forwarded regularly for his use through the friend who had thus come forward at his need. To Mr. Browning's respectful and judicious guidance Landor showed himself docile from the first. Removed from the inflictions, real and imaginary, of his life at Fiesole, he became another man, and at times still seemed to those about him like the old Landor at his best. It was in July, 1859, that the new arrangements for his life were made. The remainder of that summer he spent at Siena, first as the guest of Mr. Story, the American sculptor and poet, next in a cottage rented for him by Mr. Browning near his own. In the autumn of the same year Landor removed to a set of apartments in the Via Nunziatina in Florence, close to the Casa Guidi, in a house kept by a former servant of Mrs. Browning's, an Englishwoman married to an Italian. Here he continued to live during the five years that yet remained to him. He was often susceptible, querulous, unreasonable, and full of imaginings. The Bath trial and its consequences pressed upon his mind with a sense of bewildering injury which at times stung him almost to madness. The deed of transfer to his eldest son had on appeal been in so far practically set aside that the damages

awarded by the jury had after all to be paid. Landor was always scheming how he might clear his character by establishing the true facts of the case; that is to say, by repeating the self-same charges the publication of which had already cost him so much. He caused a "vindication" to be printed, and wrote pressing Mr. Forster to help him to get it made public. When his instances to this effect were received with silence or remonstrance, he imagined grievances against even that proved and devoted friend, and suspended communications with him for a time. The delay which ensued in the issue of a new edition of his *Hellenics*, prepared partly before he left England and partly while he was still at Fiesole, exasperated him much as similar delays had exasperated him of old, and led, as of old, to the burning, in a moment of irritation, of a quantity of literary materials that lay by him.

Notwithstanding all these private self-tormentings and indignant lashings of the wounded lion in his retreat, he remained to his small circle of friends and visitors in Florence a figure the most venerable and the most impressive. Although weaker in all ways, he retained all his ancient distinction, and many of his ancient habits. He had found a successor to Pomero in the shape of another dog of the same breed which had been given him by Mr. Story. The name of this new pet was Giallo, and Giallo became to Landor's last days all that Pomero had been before. Landor, who in the first two or three of these years at Florence still contrived to walk to a moderate extent, became known to the new generation of Florentines as the old man with the beautiful dog, *il vecchio con quel bel canino*. He frequented too, again, his old haunts among the picture-dealers, and bought out of his slender pittance almost as many bad pictures as of yore. The occasional

society and homage of some old friends and some new prevented his life from being too solitary. The death of Mrs. Browning in 1861, and her husband's consequent departure for England, took away from him his best friends of all. He had found also a great pleasure in the society of a young American lady, Miss Kate Field, who has given us an affectionate portrait of the old man in these declining days. Almost toothless now, and partially deaf, his appearance was changed by the addition of a flowing and snow-white beard. This, every one said, made him look more like an old lion than ever, and he liked, as he had always liked, to be reminded of the resemblance. He could still be royal company when he pleased. He taught his young American friend Latin, and opened out for her with delight the still abundant treasures of his mind. His memory for new friends, and for names in general, as well as for recent events, had become uncertain; but his remoter recollections, his stories, as he used to call them, "of the year one," were as vivid and full of power as ever. It produced upon his hearers an effect almost of awe to listen to this heroic survivor of another age, whose talk, during the last ministry of Lord Palmerston, and on the eve of the American war of Secession, would run on things which he remembered under the first ministry of Pitt, or as a child during the American war of Independence. Garibaldi was the hero of his old age as Washington had been the hero of his youth. He followed with passionate interest the progress of Italian emancipation. He insisted one day that his watch should be pawned and the proceeds given to the fund in aid of Garibaldi's wounded. He was more indignant than ever with his old acquaintance, the French Emperor, for his treacherous dealings with the Italian nation. He wrote political epigrams

in English and political odes in Latin; an address in English to the Sicilians; and, in far from faultless Italian, a dialogue between Savonarola and the Prior of St. Mark's —the proceeds to go, as the watch had only been prevented by the care of his friends from going, for the benefit of Garibaldi's wounded.

In these days the books which the old man liked best to read were novels, and he got from the library and read with delight some of those of Trollope and of his old friend G. P. R. James, speaking and writing of the latter in particular with an extravagant partiality of praise. He would often talk of books, and of the technical matters of language and the literary art, with all his old mastery and decision. On such points he was much given to quoting the opinion of his dog Giallo. Giallo, he said, was the best of critics as well as the most delightful of companions, and it was not "I," but "Giallo and I," who paid visits or entertained views on politics and literature. Giallo was the subject of many verses, extemporary and other. "Why, Giallo," said the old man one day, "your nose is hot,

> "But he is foolish who supposes
> Dogs are ill that have hot noses."

Here are some unpublished lines of great feeling, written on the same theme, which I find under date of Aug. 1, 1860:

> "Giallo! I shall not see thee dead,
> Nor raisé a stone above thy head,
> For I shall go, some years before,
> Where thou wilt leap at me no more,
> Nor bark, as now, to make me mind,
> Asking me, am I deaf or blind.
> No, Giallo, but I shall be soon,
> And thou wilt scratch my turf and moan."

Humorous denunciations of modern slang and modern ill-manners formed also a considerable part of Landor's talk in these days. His own manners remained, while strength was left, as fine as ever. He was full of beautiful complimentary speeches, of quick and graceful retorts, of simple old-fashioned presents and attentions. He would always see his lady friends to the door, and help them into their carriage bare-headed. If he accompanied them, as he sometimes did, on their drives, he would always take his place on the back seat. One day they were deeply touched by his expression of a wish to drive up to the gate of the Fiesolan villa, and by the look of wistfulness which came over his noble aged face as he sat in silence, gazing at that alienated home for the last time.

His American friends before long departed too, and the old man was left with less company than ever, except that of Giallo, and of his own thoughts and memories. He continued at intervals to take pleasure in the society of Mr. Robert (now Earl) Lytton, and in that of the son of his old friend Francis Hare, to whom he had been full of kindness and of attention throughout his boyhood. Little by little the fire of life sank lower in him. He grew deafer and deafer, so that at last the visits of his old friend Kirkup, now also deaf, almost ceased to give him pleasure. He suffered more and more from cough, dizziness, and disinclination for food. He became less and less conscious of outward and present facts, or conscious of them only for moments of brief and half-bewildered awakening. His letters of these years are short, and more abrupt than ever, though each proposition they contain, no matter how trivial its subject, is generally as vigorous and as stately in form as of old. From 1861 to 1863 Mr. Browning was Landor's principal correspondent.

In the last year of his life he ceased to remember his unreasonable grievance against Mr. Forster, and wrote to him with all his old warmth and gratefulness of affection, expressly confirming, among other things, the choice by which he had long ago designated him as his biographer and literary executor.

In his inward life and the customary operations of his mind, Landor continued almost to the last to retain an astonishing and unquenchable vigour. He was continually taking up pen and paper in the old sudden way to put down fragments that he had been composing, whether in verse or prose, in English or in Latin. "I am sometimes at a loss for an English word," he said to a friend about this time, "never for a Latin." Two volumes of his writing, chiefly in verse, appeared after his return to Italy. The first of these, long delayed in the press, was a second and enlarged edition of the *Hellenics* of 1847. Of the idyls contained in the earlier edition the majority here appear again, some having been completely re-written, that is to say re-translated, from the original Latin, in the interval. One or two pieces which appeared in the old volume are omitted, and among those introduced for the first time are several Greek scenes and idyls, including metrical versions of two of his former prose dialogues, *Achilles and Helena*, and *Peleus and Thetis*, and one or two pieces not belonging to the Greek cycle at all. The old dedication to Pio Nono is replaced by one to Sir William Napier, and this is followed by a graceful invocation to the Muses to "come back home"—home, that is, from less congenial haunts to the scenes and the memories of Hellas. On the whole, this edition of the *Hellenics* is neither in form nor in substance an improvement of that in 1847. It was four years later that there ap-

peared Landor's next, and last, volume, the *Heroic Idyls*. In the interval he had contributed two or three prose dialogues to the *Athenæum*. The *Heroic Idyls* is a volume entirely of verse, about four parts English and one part Latin. Besides a number of personal and occasional pieces, some written recently, and many long ago, in Landor's usual vein between epigrammatic trifling and tender gravity, there are in this volume some half-a-dozen new dialogues or dramatic scenes in verse, of which *Theseus and Hippolyta*, and the *Trial of Æschylus*, are among Landor's very best work in this kind. Here, from the dialogue of the Amazonian Queen and her Athenian vanquisher, is an example of the poetry which the old man was still capable of writing at eighty-eight:

"*Theseus.* My country shall be thine, and there thy state
Regal.
Hippolyta. Am I a child? give me my own,
And keep for weaker heads thy diadems.
Thermodon I shall never see again,
Brightest of rivers, into whose clear depth
My mother plunged me from her warmer breast,
And taught me early to divide the waves
With arms each day more strong, and soon to chase
And overtake the father swan, nor heed
His hoarser voice or his uplifted wing."

Let us only add from the *Heroic Idyls* a few lines of its brief preface, turned with Landor's old incomparable air of temperate and dignified self-assurance—

"He who is within two paces of his ninetieth year may sit down and make no excuses; he must be unpopular, he never tried to be much otherwise; he never contended with a contemporary, but walked alone on the far eastern uplands, meditating and remembering."

The *Heroic Idyls* appeared in the autumn of 1863, with a dedication to Mr. Edward Twisleton, to whom Landor had a few months before entrusted the manuscript of the volume to be brought home. The society of this accomplished scholar and amiable gentleman was almost the last in which Landor was able to take pleasure. From the beginning of 1864 his infirmities of all kinds increased upon him. Even after the publication of the *Heroic Idyls* he had sent home a new batch of five short dialogues in prose and verse. But the end was now fast approaching. In the mid-spring of his eighty-ninth year (1864) he was still able to take a momentary pleasure and interest in the visit of the young English poet, Mr. Swinburne, already the most ardent of his admirers, and soon to become the most melodious of his panegyrists, who had made a pilgrimage to Florence on purpose to see the old man's face before he died. Except for such transitory awakenings, Landor had sunk by the summer of 1864 into almost complete unconsciousness of external things. He could still call his faculties about him for a few minutes, to write fragments of verse, or short notes to Mr. Browning or Mr. Forster, but these notes are often incoherent and interrupted. During these last months his two youngest sons came down from the villa, and tended with kindness the closing hours of their father. About the middle of September the throat trouble from which he had long suffered brought on a difficulty in swallowing. He refused to take nourishment, and sank, after three days' abstinence, in a fit of coughing, on the 17th September, 1864.

And so the indomitable spirit was spent at last, and the old lion was at rest.

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

"I NEVER did a single wise thing in the whole course of my existence, although I have written many which have been thought such," reflects Landor, in one of the scrawled and fugitive confessions of his last years. Landor's power lay, in truth, not in doing, but in thinking and saying. His strength was not in the management of life, but in the creative and critical operations of the mind. Of all men who ever lived, none furnishes a more complete type of what Mr. Matthew Arnold, in speaking of Dante, calls "the born artist, the born solitary;" the man to be judged not by his acts but by his utterances. Or, if we are to judge these unpractical spirits by their acts also, by their outward as well as by their inward manifestations, then the test which we apply must be the test not of success, but of intention. It is not in their nature to be successful; it was in Landor's nature least of all. Dashed by his volcanic temperament and his blinding imagination into collision with facts, he suffered shipwreck once and again. But if we apply to his character and career the measure not of results, but of intention, we shall acknowledge in Landor a model on the heroic scale of many noble and manly virtues. He had a heart infinitely kind and tender. His generosity was royal, delicate, never hesitating. In

his pride there was no moroseness, in his independence not a shadow of jealousy. From spite, meanness, or uncharitableness he was utterly exempt. He was loyal and devoted in friendship, and, what is rare, at least as prone to idealize the virtues of his friends as the vices of his enemies. Quick as was his resentment of a slight, his fiercest indignations were never those which he conceived on personal grounds, but those with which he pursued an injustice or an act of cruelty; nor is there wanting an element of nobleness and chivalry in even the wildest of his breaches with social custom. He was no less a worshipper of true greatness than he was a despiser of false. He hated nothing but tyranny and fraud, and for those his hatred was implacable. His bearing under the consequences of his own impracticability was of an admirable courage and equanimity. True, he did not learn by experience; but then neither did he repine at misfortune. Another man, conscious of his intentions, and reaping the reward he reaped, would have never ceased to complain. Landor wore a brave face always, and after a catastrophe counted up, not his losses, but his consolations, his "felicities," reckoning among them even that sure symptom of a wholesome nature, the constant pleasantness of his nightly dreams. There is a boyishness about his outbreaks from first to last. At the worst, he is like a kind of gigantic and Olympian schoolboy; a nature passionate, unteachable, but withal noble, courageous, loving-hearted, bountiful, wholesome and sterling to the heart's core.

But it is the work and not the life of a man like Landor which in reality most concerns us. In his work, then, as it seems to me, Landor is a great and central artist in his mother tongue, and a great creative master of historic sentiment and of the human heart. He is at the same

time a great critic—I use the word in its natural sense, the sense in which criticism is distinguished from creation —a great critic of life; a masterly, if occasionally capricious, critic of literature; a striking, if impulsive and impetuous, critic of history and government.

The causes of his scant popularity are not difficult to discern. His thoughts were not of a nature especially to stir his own or any one time. He was, indeed, the son of his age in his passion for liberty, and in his spirit of humanity and tenderness for the dumb creation; and his imaginative instinct and imaginative longings in the direction of ancient Hellas were shared by the general European culture of his time. But for the rest he ranged, apart from the passions or the tempests of the hour, among the heroic figures of the past and the permanent facts and experiences of life. He "walked along the far eastern uplands, meditating and remembering;" and to the far eastern uplands those who could walk with him must brace themselves to mount. Even then there are difficulties arising from that want of consideration and sympathy in Landor for his readers of which I have spoken. He sometimes puzzles us for want of explanations, and often fatigues us with intrusive disquisitions. These, however, are the imperfections of a great master, and the way to counteract them is by providing the student with help where help is wanted; by selection, above all, and in the next place by occasional comment or introduction. A selection or golden treasury of Landor's shorter dramatic dialogues, edited with such helps for the reader as I suggest, would be, as was said long ago by Julius Hare, "one of the most beautiful books in the language, that is to say in the world." From the longer, the discursive dialogues, perhaps the only selection possible for popular use would

be one on the principle adopted by Mr. Hilliard—a selection, that is, of detached sentences and sayings. These form a kind of literature in which England since the seventeenth century has not been rich; and from the conversations and other prose writings of Landor there is to be gathered such an anthology of them as the literature of France itself could hardly surpass. If, indeed, there is any English writer who can be compared to Pascal for power and compression, for incisive strength and imaginative breadth together, in general reflections, and for the combination of conciseness with splendour in their utterance, it is certainly Landor. Space has failed me to illustrate or do more than name this province of his genius. The true Landorian, no doubt, will prefer to dig these jewels for himself from their surroundings—surroundings sometimes attractive and sometimes the reverse; but true Landorians may at present be counted on the fingers, and I speak of what has to be done in order to extend to wider circles the knowledge of so illustrious a master.

In calling him a great artist in English letters, I refer rather to his prose than to his verse. He was equally at home, as I began by saying, in both forms, but it is in prose only that he is at his best. He had himself no illusions upon this point, and consistently declared, at least after he had applied himself to the *Imaginary Conversations*, that poetry was his amusement, prose his proper study and business. Again: "The only thing which makes me imagine that I cannot be a very bad poet, is that I never supposed myself to be a very good one." That which essentially distinguishes poetry from prose is the presence of two inseparable elements in just proportion—emotion, and the musical regulation and control of emotion. In the poetry of Landor the element of control

is apt to be in excess; his verses are apt to be sedate to the point of tameness. As a matter of critical preference, indeed, he preferred the poetry of sobriety and restraint to the poetry of vehemence and of enthusiasm. "What is there lovely in poetry unless there be moderation and composure?" Well and good; but observing moderation and composure, it is still possible to strike and to maintain the true poetical pitch and poetical ring. Landor strikes them often, but never, as it seems to me, maintains them long. Therefore his quite short pieces, whether gay or grave, pieces that express a fancy or an emotion with neatness and precision approaching the epigrammatic, and with musical cadences of extreme simplicity, are, on the whole, his best. His lighter autobiographical verses of all kinds, and including those written at greater length in blank verse or eight-syllable rhymes, contain much, as the reader will have perceived by such specimens as we have been able to give, that is in a high degree dignified, interesting, and graceful. In his loftier flights Landor is admirable and disappointing by turns. In high-pitched lyrical writing he will start often with a magnificent movement—

> "Not were that submarine
> Gem-lighted city mine"—

and fall within a few lines into a prosaic sedateness both of thought and sound. In high-pitched narrative or dramatic writing he is sometimes more sustained; but when, in verse, Landor becomes sustained, he is apt also to become monotonous.

But if Landor is a poet, so far as concerns the form of his verse, only of the second order, he is unquestionably a prose writer of the very first. "Good prose," he says, "to say nothing of the original thoughts it conveys, may be in-

finitely varied in modulation. It is only an extension of metres, an amplification of harmonies, of which even the best and most varied poetry admits but few." Landor had too rigid and mechanical a conception of the laws of verse; in the extended metres and amplified harmonies of prose he was an extraordinary and a noble master. There was not the simplest thing but received in his manner of saying it a charm of sound as well as a natural and grave distinction of air; there was not the most stupendous in the saying of which he ever allowed himself to lose moderation or control. His passion never hurries him, in prose, into the regular beats or equi-distant accents of verse; he accumulates clause upon clause of towering eloquence, but in the last clause never fails to plant his period composedly and gracefully on its feet. His perfect instinct for the rhythms and harmonies of prose reveals itself as fully in three lines as in a hundred. It is only a great master of prose who could have written this:

"A bell warbles the more mellifluously in the air when the sound of the stroke is over, and when another swims out from underneath it, and pants upon the element that gave it birth."

Or this:

"There are no fields of amaranth on this side of the grave: there are no voices, O Rhodopè, that are not soon mute, however tuneful: there is no name, with whatever emphasis of passionate love repeated, of which the echo is not faint at last."

But harmony and rhythm are only the superficial beauties of a prose style. Style itself, in the full meaning of the word, depends upon something deeper and more inward. Style means the instinctive rule, the innate principle of selection and control, by which an artist shapes and regulates every expression of his mind. Landor was in

English prose an artist comparable with the highest in their respective spheres; with Milton in English verse, or with Handel in music. He was as far as possible from seeking after or recommending any of the qualities generally denoted by fine writing. So far as he sought after or recommended anything, it was the study of simplicity, parsimony, and the severest accuracy in speech. "I hate false words, and seek with care, difficulty, and moroseness those that fit the thing." If Landor is at times a magniloquent and even a pompous writer, the reason is that his large words befit the largeness of his thoughts and images, and pomp is the natural expression of his genius. The instinct of dignity, combined with the study of simplicity and directness; natural majesty, and the absence of artificial ornament; these are the first characteristics of Landor's prose. The next are the completeness and mutual independence of its separate clauses and periods. His sentences are apt to stand alone like his ideas, and to consist either of single clauses, each giving accurate expression to a single thought, or of carefully harmonized and adjusted groups of clauses giving expression to a group of closely connected and interdependent thoughts. The best skeleton type of a Landorian sentense is that which we quoted some pages back on Lord Byron: "I had avoided him; I had slighted him; he knew it; he did not love me; he could not." No conjunctions, no transitions; each statement made by itself, and their connexion left to be discerned by the reader. If we take the most sustained examples of Landor's eloquence, we shall find in them so many amplified and enriched examples of the same method. These qualities render his prose an unrivalled vehicle for the expression of the more stable, permanent, massive order of ideas and images. But for expressing ideas of

sequence, whether the sequence of propositions in an argument, or the sequence of incidents in a narrative, Landor's style is less adapted. There is a natural analogy between various manners of writing and the other arts; and the ordinary criticism on Landor, that he seems to write in marble, is true enough. Solidity, beauty and subtlety of articulation, mass with grace, and strength with delicacy, these are the qualities which he obtains to perfection, but he obtains them at the price of a certain immobility. He was probably right in believing that he had imparted to his work yet another of the qualities of marble—its imperishableness.

THE END.

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